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G. D. H. Cole's "Socialist Thought"

John Gollan

[With the death of Professor G. D. H. Cole the Labour movement has lost an outstanding scholar and historian of the movement. We are all indebted to his works, even though our views may have differed on a number of issues.]

TO write a history of socialist thought and the working class movement over the past half century, is to survey the class struggle in the age of imperialism, war, proletarian revolution and colonial liberation.

However narrative in style, the writer must make a judgment, assess the responsibility of men and movements, and the viability of theories and ideologies in the light of history. Lessons must be drawn and, inevitably, conclusions reached, not only on the past but on the present and for the future.

In view of what is at stake, is impartiality possible? Indeed, has the word any real meaning when one's very judgment of the past, however honest, depends on one's strivings, hopes and efforts for the future?

And who can best judge? Those who helped make history or those who watched it as spectators?

G. D. H. Cole recognised this problem in writing his *History of Socialist Thought,** which unfortunately be was unable to complete.

The historian of socialist thought in this period, he wrote, is "dealing with disputes that are very much alive and will necessarily arouse both his own passions and those of his readers. . . ." "I flatter myself," he continued, "that I am in a better position than many of my fellow-Socialists to be fair as between the two extreme views (Communist and Social Democratic) because I have never found myself able to accept either." This attitude, he added, made him the adherent of left-wing non-Communist socialism, "a position which, in my own country, I might have found it very difficult to sustain had I been an active instead of an 'armchair' or academic politician."

In brief his case is that in the great emergency which followed the First World War, both Communism and Social Democracy followed wrong policies. The Social Democrats he found slaves of parliamentary dogma, and the Communists slaves of the Russian myth of Soviet Revolution

> "The Socialist movement seemed to have become disastrously divided into socialists who were no longer even aiming at Socialism, and socialists who refused to admit that there could be varying roads towards Socialism in countries differently placed. . . ." (IV, II, p. 894).
>
> "The battle of the rival internationals was a real battle of contending temperaments as well as of opposed convictions. It was, in my opinion, a battle between two wrongs which were quite unable to join forces to make a right" (IV, I, p. 366).

Here indeed is academic detachment; it is the attitude of a plague on both your houses, a position which leads to indecision and impotence in the face of rapidly moving and decisive events. In fact, however, Cole's honesty leads him further than this and, whatever his criticisms of Communism (and they are many and deep), his record shows that Communism and the Communist Parties led the movement forward at the critical and important moments of struggle, while right-wing Social Democracy failed.

1914: The Testing Time

The first critical testing time for Social Democracy and for Communism, represented by Lenin and the Bolshevik wing of the R.S.D.L.P., was the First World War. It was out of this experience and the subsequent revolutionary crisis brought by the war, that the modern Communist movement emerged.

Pre-1914 imperialism was the era of the mass Social Democratic Parties united in the Second International. The International was dominated by the German Social Democratic Party which, abandoning the Marxist heritage of Bebel and the elder Liebknecht, had gone over to reformism despite its talk of revolution. With the Germans, the French, Austrian, Belgian, Italian and Dutch Social Democratic Parties (also Marxist in

* In four volumes: Vol. I, *Socialist Thought—The Forerunners;* Vol. II, *Marxism and Anarchism;* Vol. III, *The Second International* (in two parts); Vol. IV, *Communism and Social Democracy* 1914-1931 (in two parts).

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phraseology but essentially reformist) were the backbone of the International. The British Labour Party affiliated in 1907. It was not even formally socialist, Lenin supporting its affiliation in the hope it would become socialist. In essence, therefore, it was an international of Social Democratic Parties of the countries of the rival imperialisms. The exception was the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, and in all the Social Democratic Parties there were Marxist wings.

Even before 1914 the Socialists knew that the impending war would be a supreme crisis for the movement. As early as 1900 the International had unanimously condemned colonialism, and under Lenin's insistence the Stuttgart Conference in 1907 passed its famous anti-war resolution. This called upon the Socialist Parties to prevent the war by all means appropriate but should it nevertheless take place, to intervene to bring it to an end, "and with all their strength to make use of the economic and political crisis created by the war to stir up the deepest strata of the people and precipitate the fall of capitalist domination." It was confirmed at the Copenhagen Congress in 1910 and at Basle in 1912.

In the event, when the long-expected test came, all the major legal parliamentary Social Democratic Parties and leaders forgot the Stuttgart resolution. Without exception they joined hands with their imperialist masters to win the war. The Bolsheviks led by Lenin remained true to the principles of Stuttgart and turned imperialist war into social revolution, a revolution which was to change the whole course of history.

And in every Social Democratic Party there were anti-war groups of varying strength—Socialists loyal to the principles of Socialism, men and women who under the influence of the war and the revolution were to form the Communist Parties of the world.

A Revolutionary Solution Needed

It was a situation calling for a revolutionary solution, but, as Cole points out, West European Socialism whatever it called itself was a reformist and not a revolutionary movement. The war compelled the Socialist International to face the question of revolutionary action, he wrote,

> "and it found this confrontation embarrassing and did not know what to do with it. . . . However interpreted, they (the paragraphs of the Stuttgart resolution) committed the international socialist movement to a great deal more than in 1914 it found itself able, or with any united desire, to perform. The Second International fell in ruins; and only in Eastern Europe did war fulfil the prophecy so often made, that European war would mean inevitably European Revolution as well" (III, II, p. 976).

Here then was the first great historical test. History's judgment, and indeed Cole's too, is that Communism rose to its historic responsibilities and Social Democracy failed.

But can the question be put quite as Cole put it? Why did "war fulfil the prophecy so often made" in Russia, but not in Western Europe?

The war brought a revolutionary crisis not only in Russia, but in Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Led by the Bolsheviks the Socialist Revolution triumphed in Russia. The Hungarian revolution of 1919 was crushed by Allied intervention. But the German revolution of 1918 was strangled by Social Democracy. It was, says Cole, " a most complete example of the wrong way to make a revolution."

German Social Democracy

The long-contemplated German Revolution, Cole argues, took the Social Democratic leaders completely by surprise. It found them unready, with no plans for a new social order. Though they had long claimed to be a revolutionary party, Ebert was but voicing a widespread sentiment when he said that he "hated revolution". In addition, Cole points out, the dominant Social Democratic leaders "had deeply committed themselves to the support of aggressive annexationist, even Pan-German policies which rendered them incapable of facing the realities of a situation involving utter German defeat." They could argue that to proceed with socialist measures meant Allied intervention. To which Cole replies they had reasons and excuses, but if they had not had these they would have invented others.

Why did the German Revolution fail? It can be said of course that a reformist party cannot lead a revolution. True. But more than this is involved. The Social Democratic leaders allied with the German General Staff crushed with military force the very elements in the German working class which attempted to lead the revolution to victory. German military collapse placed power in the hands of the working class, in the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske, forming the Provisional Government, entered into an active alliance with Hindenburg and the General Staff to defend German capitalism at its most critical moment of collapse. There was as yet no Communist Party. The illegal Spartacus League of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg was only formed in 1916, the Independent Socialist Party in 1917. They organised the Revolution. This was the

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contradiction. The masses carrying through a revolution, were organised in a Social Democratic Party controlled by the right or the vacillating Independent Socialist Party. The independents entered Scheidemann's government without conditions or guarantees, "a fatal error" Cole points out. The Kaiser went, but state power remained in the hands of the monopolists and the junkers.

For a decisive change it was necessary at least to make a clean sweep of the Kaiser's judiciary, army and civil service. Does this mean, then, Cole asks, that the Germans ought to have attempted a revolution on the Russian model? His answer is, No; such a revolution would have divided the workers, would have been doomed to failure, and would have brought Allied intervention.

What then? He argues:

> "There were, however, intermediate courses open to them. They could have used the power of the provisional Socialist Government to decree immediately the breaking up of the great estates, the socialisation of the great capitalist combines, and above all the replacement of the holders of key positions throughout the Reich by persons friendly to the revolution and prepared to serve it in good faith."

But was this an "intermediate" course? For what are these measures but steps in the direction of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which Cole says he rejects? And would these revolutionary measures not have brought Allied intervention? Why were they not taken? Let Cole himself answer:

> "These things were not done, not only because the Social Democratic leaders were afraid to do them, but also because they did not want to. They feared the collapse of the existing society much more than they hoped for a really new social order; and because of these fears they betrayed the revolution and helped to bring the Republic to its dismal collapse" (IV, II, p. 894).

Could there be a more damning indictment of right-wing Social Democracy? Had the German workers been led by a Communst Party instead of by Scheidemann there could have been a Socialist Germany alongside a Socialist Russia. As it was, the strangling of the Revolution was to lead to Hitler and the Second War War.

Cole's Views of the Russian Revolution

If Cole could thus deliver devastating judgment upon German Social Democracy, what of his views of the Russian Revolution?

It was clear to him that revolution was the only way of advance for the Russian people. Tsarism, he writes, was a monstrous, stupid tyranny, an obsolete and revolting structure that needed to be overthrown by a new power strong enough to lead the Russians into the contemporary world. And he goes on:

> "Had the Bolsheviks failed to seize their chance when it came, it seems most improbable that any other group would have been able to hold Russia together, to beat off the invaders, and to lay the foundations of the advanced economy and of a more democratic opening of opportunity for education and training in the arts of production."

Why did they succeed? Because they were revolutionary Marxists.

But here comes his dilemma, the dilemma of the academic liberal-minded politician who was honest enough to recognise that no traditional, parliamentary solution was possible. It is instructive to see how he faces it. The human sufferings of the Revolution he found largely unavoidable. But he attacks the "inhumanities and abuses of the police state". The root of the trouble he finds not in the cult of personality, but in the cult of centralism and a vast bureaucratic machine which identified strength with ruthlessness and discarded morality as a "bourgeois prejudice". Yet at the same time he remarks, "there are more kinds of tyranny and oppression than the political and more kinds of freedom than the liberal-democratic freedoms that are rightly valued in the countries of the West."

Then comes his judgment. The Russian Revolution "remains a great and glorious achievement"; it acted as "an immense liberating force". "It cannot be easy to strike the correct balance between good and evil, but I at any rate can feel no doubt that the long-run balance will turn out to be on the right side" (IV, II, pp. 894-5).

How can tyranny and oppression be a liberating force, a great and glorious achievement? Freedom and liberty are class questions under Socialism or under capitalism—they are not abstractions. Freedom for the tsar and the Russian ruling class meant tyranny for the people. They had to be overthrown for real freedom to blossom. Free speech for the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries (it existed up to 1922) became their alliance with the White Guards, counter-revolution and Allied intervention to overthrow the Revolution by force—to betray the Revolution as did their counterparts in Germany. Had they succeeded there would have been no glorious achievement. The Russian working class won real freedom—a working class state, social ownership

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of the means of production, the democratic direction of their economy and social life. The German workers got the Weimar Republic which on paper guaranteed them freedom and democracy. But state power and social ownership remained in the hands of the monopolists and junkers, which eventually made these freedoms illusory.

That in the exceptional fifteen years of the rise of fascism and the supreme trial of the Second World War the abuses (exposed and corrected by the Bolsheviks themselves) of the so-called cult of Stalin could arise under the emergency decrees of the period, did not and could not affect the fact that the Russian Revolution alone laid the basis for a Socialist society, for a Socialist democracy.

Just as the betrayal of the German Revolution by German Social Democracy eventually gave rise to Hitler and the Second World War, so the victory of the Russian Revolution led by the Communists brought about Hitler's defeat.

The Two Internationals

The First World War resulted in two Internationals, the reconstituted Labour and Socialist International and the Communist International, with their contrasting policies and strategies.

As has already been pointed out, Cole's case is that both Internationals took the wrong road, after the war; that the Socialist International carried on like its ill-fated predecessor, while the Communist International grossly under-estimated the recuperative powers of capitalism and over-estimated the revolutionary potential of the working class, until the rise of fascism made it call for the united front.

Cole, however, himself shows that the entire period between the wars was one of the "continuing malaise of world capitalism", the economic and monetary instability of the 1920's and the depression and unemployment of the 1930's. This taken with the colonial liberation movement and the general growth of the Labour movement, "all seemed to warrant the belief that stable reconstruction of the old order was impracticable" (IV, I, p. 317). But, he adds, the advent of fascism should have warned otherwise.

What of the reconstituted Labour and Socialist International in this period? It was, he said, a reformist International, once again almost exclusively West European, based on the German, Austrian, Belgian, Dutch, French and Scandinavian Parties, with the British Labour Party now playing a leading part. It, too, in the immediate post-war years referred to the increasing disintegration of the capitalist system. It hastened to repudiate Communism, and, in Cole's words, "to renounce all hope of a re-united working class movement." In words, it was for socialism step by step, for both democracy and socialism.

But what about deeds?

When the tide of reaction and the rise of Italian and Balkan fascism by 1923 proved the earlier parliamentary successes illusory, the Communist International proposed joint action to the Socialist International. It was brusquely rejected.

The L.S.I., said Cole, took a rosy view of the impending downfall of Italian fascism. By 1928 it was in a dream world of "stabilised capitalism". The report to its Brussels Congress in 1928, he remarks, hardly read like the report of a body devoted to socialism. "The report seemed to look forward to a period of increasing economic prosperity under conditions of growing stability; there was not a hint of the great depression that was to be started on its way by the American stock market collapse only a year later." Communist predictions about a coming crisis, he writes, were dismissed as wishful thinking "which no doubt they were"—"but there was also wishful thinking in the L.S.I., whose leaders appeared to be fully reconciled to a very gradual advance, even in the field of social legislation, and to be putting their principal hopes on the strengthening of the League of Nations as an instrument for peace and disarmament" (IV, II, pp. 698-9).

All over Europe the Socialist Parties were saying capitalism had changed, just as they say today. In Britain, the I.L.P. was claiming that Ford had replaced Marx, and waging their campaign on Socialism and the living wage. It was the period of high hopes, of the Second Labour Government which was later to be swept away in the debacle of 1931.

Even after 1931 and the most serious crisis capitalism had ever experienced, the Socialist leaders expected a normal economic recovery. In short, said Cole, in 1931 the L.S.I. was continuing much the same activities as before the crisis, but was compelled to pay attention to the rise of fascism and the danger of unemployment. On the part of the L.S.I. he wrote, "There was no sign of any movement towards securing a wider measure of working class unity in the face of these dangers, or of any relaxation of the sharp antagonism between the rival internationals" (IV, II, p. 701).

But if the Social Democratic analysis of the period was self-deception which disarmed the working class in face of the severe trials before them, what of the Communist analysis? The Sixth Congress of the Communist International met in the middle of 1928. The published thesis declared it to be a period of developing technique,

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increased capitalist monopoly, fierce competition, growing war danger, increasing national liberation and class struggle. The whole situation, it declared, was coming to a head and "inevitably leads, through a further development of the contradictions of capitalist stabilisation, to a renewed disturbance of capitalist stabilisation and to the extreme aggravation of the general crisis of capitalism." Hardly wishful thinking. By 1929 the economic crisis had broken and in the decade following parliamentary government had been destroyed in Germany, Austria and Spain, and the world was at war.

Communist Appeals for Unity

Cole's history ends at 1931, so he could not deal with the repeated appeals and efforts subsequently of the Communist International and the Communist Parties to establish a united front with the L.S.I. and the various Social Democratic Parties against the economic crisis, fascism and war. It was clearly his intention to do so.* But in his chapter devoted to the Weimar Republic up to 1931, he makes an initial estimation of the responsibility for the rise of Hitler. The Weimar Republic was a Social Democratic creation. On paper the freest and most democratic republic in the world; in fact it was the facade behind which the forces of monopoly capitalism and the junkers, rescued by Ebert and Scheidemann in 1918, grew strong and eventually conquered. Through its entire history the Social Democrats either composed the government or governed in coalition with the German ruling class parties. It was the Weimar Republic which gave birth to fascism and German Social Democracy paved the way for Hitler, just as it betrayed the Revolution in 1918.

At the height of the economic crisis between 1929 and 1932 the Social Democrats supported three successive capitalist governments which ruled by "Emergency Decree" in defiance of parliament (the governments of Brüning, Schleicher and Von Papen) on the grounds that they were a lesser evil than Hitler. With this same argument they supported Hindenburg as Chancellor in 1932. In fact German monopoly capitalism ruling by emergency decree was not only making the working class pay for the crisis, but was preparing to bring in Hitler's open fascist rule. It was Hindenburg who installed Hitler as Chancellor. The Social Democratic leaders did everything except fight. Their historical responsibility for Hitler's victory cannot be evaded.

Cole argues, however, that the German Communists also had a responsibility. His case is that they refused to take the Nazi danger seriously and even at certain points made common cause with the Nazis, for example "in the plebiscite by which an attempt was made to displace the Prussian Social Democratic Government in 1931". This single "example" is then generalised into the "support" given to the Nazis by the German Communists in 1930-31 by Stalin's orders, "and it is even arguable that in ordering this support he (Stalin) brought about Hitler's conquest of power and thus induced the Second World War" (IV, II, p. 661).

This argument won't do. The Nazi demand for a plebiscite for the dissolution of the Prussian Parliament and a new election was made in July 1931. It was a typical demagogic demand to rally to the Nazis the mass discontent arising from the Brüning emergency hunger decrees which were supported by the Social Democrats. The Communists offered to oppose the Nazi demand for a plebiscite if the Social Democratic Prussian government restored freedom to write and demonstrate against the emergency decrees, withdrew all the Brüning cuts in benefits and wages, and gave the same freedom for the workers to organise for self-defence as was officially given to the monarchist Stahlhelm and the Nazi storm troops. The Social Democrats refused. The Communists then began their own campaign for dissolution and a new election with the demands the Social Democrats had rejected. At no stage was there co-operation with the Nazis: on the contrary there was continual fighting and the Nazis soon dropped their campaign altogether. Nor is there any indication that Stalin was in any way involved.

The German Communists no doubt made mistakes, but they fought consistently for the united front both before the Nazi movement developed and especially in the 30's when fascism was advancing. In April 1932 the Communist Party proposed a joint struggle of all working class organisations against wage cuts. It was rejected. When later in 1932 Von Papen drove the Social Democrats out of the Prussian government, the Communist Party proposed a joint general strike for the repeal of the emergency decrees and the disbandment of the Nazi Storm troops; this was rejected too. On January 30th, 1933, came the third Communist appeal, after Hitler had been installed as Chancellor. There was no official answer. Nor was there any answer to the further Communist appeal for united action after the burning of the Reichstag. Instead the Social Democratic leaders tried to make their peace with Hitler. On May 17th, 1933, the entire Social Democratic Party in the Reichstag voted for the Hitler government

* I understand that Cole had completed a further volume of his history just before he died.

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resolution. This did not help them, and on June 22nd Hitler dissolved the party.

Austrian Social Democracy

And what of the powerful Austrian Social Democracy which, says Cole, was the best representative in the L.S.I. of the non-Communist left? It was the boast of Otto Bauer that Austrian Social Democracy had saved Austria from proletarian revolution in 1918. They created the bourgeois republic which in turn gave rise to the Heimwehr and Austrian fascism.

The great pride of Austrian Social Democracy was the social services of Vienna. But when the economic crisis came in 1931, their basis was undermined.

> "Thereafter", writes Cole, "the position of the Socialists grew steadily weaker, especially after Hitler's advent to power in Germany. In face of the increasing violence of the reactionary Heimwehr and of control of the central government by the reactionary wing of the Christian Social Party, the Socialists were continually having to choose between making concessions in order to avoid civil war, and taking a stand which was certain to lead them into a civil war that would mean the starvation of Vienna. They gave ground again and again, until at length the Christian Social Fuhrer, Engelbert Dollfuss, aided by the Heimwehr, trampled the Democratic Republic into the dust only for his regime to be overthrown a short time afterwards by the invading Nazis, who annexed Austria to the Third Reich" (IV, II, p. 863).

When the testing time came in March 1933 they negotiated with Dollfuss to avoid civil war. But the civil war came nonetheless in 1934, in conditions disastrous for Social Democracy and the working class. Bauer later admitted this was a fatal mistake. It is curious that Cole does not quote this.

Cole on the British Labour Party

We have already remarked that a decisive new feature in the L.S.I. was the emergence of the mass British Labour Party. How does Cole judge its performance? He is unsparing in his criticism.

Labour and the New Social Order, the party programme of 1918, he remarks, was "thoroughly gradualist and unrevolutionary". Afterwards in *Labour and the Nation* (1927) and in the series of immediate policy pamphlets in between, the party "appeared as an essentially reformist party, seeking piecemeal ameliorations rather than any catastrophic social and economic change".

Events proved, however, that the programmes were better than the performance. The first Labour Government in 1924, said Cole, "ended in inglorious fiasco". To MacDonald it seemed all to the good that it depended on Liberal support and therefore he had his excuse for not challenging the basic institutions of capitalism. The Second Labour Government in 1929 Cole finds even worse:

> "The fall of the Labour Government in 1931 was even more ignominious than that of its predecessor seven years before, for it was the outcome of sheer and manifest incompetence in handling the entire situation in which Great Britain had been placed by the world economic crisis" (IV, II, p. 673).

With the debacle of 1931, he continues, the first generation of British Labour Party leaders "pass ingloriously out of action". MacDonald had "ceased to be in any way a Socialist", Snowden was more of a Socialist but devoted to "financial orthodoxy" and Thomas "never even pretended to be a Socialist". Attlee, Morrison and Dalton were due to come to the front. One can ask whether fundamentally they were any better, for under their leadership the Labour Party, then the dominant body in the L.S.I., after the rise of fascism was the most frenzied opponent of united action to defeat Hitler. And when they headed the Labour Government in 1945, their record, whatever reforms were made possible in those years of British capitalist prosperity, was as barren of real socialist transformation as their predecessors'.

Cole's criticism is not that the MacDonald Labour Government didn't attempt Socialism. It faced a difficult situation, he admits, and continues:

> "It had, however, no excuse for its extreme pusillanimity in dealing with the problem of unemployment: for in that field had it set out resolutely to create additional jobs, it had the assurance of enough Liberal support to be able to carry through its proposals in the House of Commons and to feel confident that the House of Lords would not venture to reject them. The plain fact is that it lacked the resolution to attempt even what the more progressive Liberals had been urging and allowed itself to drift helplessly to disaster."

Social Democratic Policy

In summing up the experiences of the two Internationals, Cole states:

> "As matters stood in 1931, when the world economic crisis reached a critical phase, Western Europe seemed in general as far off Socialism as it had done ten years earlier; and Communism,

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> though it had consolidated its authority in the Soviet Union, seemed a long way further off achieving world revolution than it had seemed to be on the morrow of the First World War" (IV, I, pp. 14-15).

Is this correct? We had seen certainly the fiasco of social democratic policy in some of the main countries—to use Cole's own words, betrayal, disaster and fiasco. The only time he, usually so sparing of superlatives, could speak of glorious achievement was about the Russian Revolution.

Insistence on parliamentary gradualism by the L.S.I., he complains, "seems to me to involve a disastrous narrowing of the socialist creed" as if it could only be applied to the parliamentary West. This approach made socialism something which could be aimed at "only in the advanced countries living under parliamentary systems of government and left Social Democrats with almost nothing to say to a large part of the world—and even of Europe" (IV, II, p. 879).

It was essentially West European, with no appeal to the colonial masses—the majority of the people of the world. The Communists, he contrasts, did attempt to make communism world wide, to make it a world influence in other continents besides Europe; "the Social Democratic and Labour Parties, on the other hand, hardly attempted at all to give their creed a world-wide application or meaning. . . . Disliking revolution at home, they tended to disapprove of it in colonial or semi-colonial countries" (IV, II, pp. 877-878).

This is indeed an under-statement, for the Socialist Governments of the inter-war years were as ruthless as their imperialist masters in putting down colonial revolt. But the Communists saw as the keystone of world socialist strategy and advance the unity of the struggle of the colonial masses for liberation with the struggle of the Western workers for social liberation. Both were fighting a common enemy. The Social Democratic parties remained confined to the imperialist states, and in preserving the existing social order they were preserving imperialism.

No one, least of all Cole, could doubt that after the First World War, a revolutionary situation existed in Germany, Austria and Hungary, as well as Russia. It is enough to point out the decisive turn the 1920's would have taken if the German, Austrian and Hungarian Revolutions, alongside the Russian Revolution, had been victorious socialist revolutions. The very thought haunted the imperialists and stirred them to frenzy and violence to prevent it. But they could have as little prevented this victory as they failed to crush the Bolsheviks, if it had not been for the subjective weakness, the domination of the masses by right-wing Social Democracy, with the newly formed Communist Parties small and still comparatively inexperienced bodies.

The root of the problem was not that the Social Democrats, pledged to parliamentary action, eschewed the use of force—they used force, but against the revolution. The real issue, as Cole himself points out, was that they did not want to change the capitalist system. And of course for countries which did not even enjoy bourgeois democracy, their creed was meaningless anyway.

For the Communists the world revolution is not a single act, but the whole complicated process of the general crisis of capitalism and the transition of the world to socialism, assuming different forms and stages of development in the different countries.

With the defeat of the post-war revolutionary wave in Europe (in China it swept forward), the Communist Parties developed in size and political maturity in the struggle against capitalism. When the economic crisis of 1929 set off the trail of events culminating in fascism and the Second World War, the Communist Parties in Europe sought to rally the united forces of the working class to defeat the naked dictatorship of monopoly capitalism expressed in fascism and to prevent world war. In Germany they failed. But in France they triumphed for a time with the Popular Front. In Spain they led the united struggle to defend the Spanish Republic. In Czechoslovakia they emerged a mass force for their heroic stand before and after Munich.

In the colonial and semi-colonial countries, in conditions of extreme persecution, above all in China, Indonesia, India and the Middle East, the Communists were in the vanguard of the struggle against imperialism, for national liberation.

The Second World War

In the event, the Second World War led to the second great revolutionary breach in the capitalist system. It resulted in the victory of socialism in Eastern Europe, the triumph of the Chinese Revolution and the wave of national liberation in Asia, the Near East, Africa and Latin America.

Repeatedly Cole returns to the charge that the Communist International split the working class movement, and because of this so many disasters overtook the movement. But what is the origin of the split? Ideologically it dates from before 1914, before the Communist International was formed. The dominant leadership of the Socialist International, as Cole himself relates, abandoned the pledges and obligations of the International.

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In the crisis of the First World War the division developed between them and those who were against the war, opposed war credits and remained true to the principles of socialism and internationalism. The war deepened the differences as the leaders openly went over to imperialism. In every Socialist Party, a left wing opposing the war developed. It was these forces which eventually formed the Communist Parties and came together in the Communist International. In some cases (France, Norway and Italy) the entire Socialist Party by an overwhelming majority went over to the Communist International, and only when the revolutionary wave subsided did right-wing Social Democracy re-establish itself.

It was the coalition of the dominant leadership of the Socialist Parties with capitalism which caused the split. It was on this historic background that the Communist Parties emerged. And the record shows that the attempts of the Communist Parties to heal the split to face the menace of fascism were opposed and defeated by the Socialist leaders.

Cole says the Communist International failed. A body which helped the development of Communist Parties in eighty-three countries, now with 32 million members, cannot be said to have failed. Already before the Second World War the main Communist Parties had grown in maturity and influence, had become truly national forces, although united by a common ideology. When the Communist International was dissolved in 1943, this was only formal acknowledgment of what was already a fact. The Parties had emerged as independent bodies. There was no longer a place for or need of a centralised international body. A new stage had opened in the history of the Communist movement.

But the great problem of healing the split in the European working class movement remains. So does the question of the road the movement in Western Europe must travel to reach Socialism.

The Present Socialist International

After the Second World War the Socialist International was reconstructed for the third time, at Frankfurt in 1951. Is its history to be the same as that of the preceding two? The very date is instructive; four years after 1947 when the cold war was ushered in by the alliance of the Socialist leaders with the representatives of imperialism, above all U.S. imperialism, in N.A.T.O. It was an alliance against Communism.

Has Social Democracy gone back or forward since then? The promise held out for social reconstruction after the anti-fascist war by the coalition governments (including the Communists) in France and Italy and by the Labour Government in Britain has gone. In France we have de Gaulle; in West Germany Adenauer; in Italy a clerical regime. The united Trade Union International was disrupted. The Labour Government gave way to Tory reaction.

In July, 1957, a *Times* editorial on the new International headed "Dogma Discarded" could say, "The declaration of principles which was drawn up when the International was revived at Frankfurt in 1951 was pleasantly vague as to allow every Party to choose its own way". Any Socialist aim had gone. It noted that since the 1955 Congress a Latin American Secretariat and an All-Asian Socialist Conference of eleven affiliated parties had been formed, and concluded, "International Socialism stands not only for an attitude. It also stands in many countries, some industrially developed and some still undeveloped, as a democratic alternative and a barrier to the spread of Communism".

In fact, the reconstituted International has remained, as before, the Socialist Parties of Western Europe, the Saragat Socialists of Italy, Mapai of Israel and the Bund, and the C.C.F. of Canada. The promised developments in Asia and Latin America have come to little or nothing. Recently (January 22nd, 1959) the same *Times* could write, "Of the N.A.T.O. Foreign Ministers who met last month in Paris, only two were Social Democrats, strange as this would have seemed ten years ago when N.A.T.O. was founded. All over Europe Social Democracy has been losing ground—and it never prevailed farther afield except within the British Commonwealth". This was the result of the cold war, of acting as the barrier to Communism on behalf of the ruling class, of the retreat from socialist principles to "managed" capitalism, common in all the latest Social Democratic programmes from that of Ollenhauer to Gaitskell's *Plan for Progress*. It is the exposure of right-wing Social Democracy in action.

Working Class Unity Decisive

Yet these Social Democratic Parties are operating in the key countries of West Europe and the N.A.T.O. alliance. The masses they organise are decisive for any political change, they are—despite the views of the official leaderships—socialist minded, a force with whom the Communists must find a common language. That is why working class unity in Europe still remains the big issue for a new political advance.

It will be to Cole's eternal credit that whatever his criticisms of Communism, he advocated working class unity, common action with the

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Soviet Union and the mass Communist Parties of France and Italy; that Western Socialism should break with N.A.T.O. and the cold war and align itself absolutely with the national liberation movement in all countries. Since he advocated this in *World Socialism Restated* (July 1956) the matter has become even more urgent with the steady drift to reaction in the N.A.T.O. countries, the advent of de Gaulle and the fascist menace in France (due to the treacherous policy of the Mollet Socialists), the growing aggressive menace of West Germany, military dictatorship in Pakistan and elsewhere.

It was arising out of this situation that the two great Communist Parties of France and Italy issued their joint appeal for working class unity on December 27th, 1958, addressing themselves "to those members of Social Democratic Parties who have expressed their criticisms of the policy of international tension, their opposition to colonial wars, and their preoccupation with the advance of reaction and fascism". This also was the appeal of the Declaration of the twelve Communist Parties of Socialist countries which met in Moscow in November 1957, and of Khrushchov's report to the Twenty-First Congress of the C.P.S.U. in January 1959.

The unity of the international Labour movement is needed in the struggle against reaction, for democratic liberties, for a programme to combat the slump, and for joint action against the danger of nuclear war. It is essential for any advance to socialism.

The growth of reaction in Europe is only one side of the picture. The other side is the sweeping progress of Socialism in the Soviet Union, People's China and Eastern Europe. The next decade with its tremendous victories for socialism will mark a new and irreversible change in the balance of world forces. It may well spell the end of colonialism in the world.

All this underlines the need for the struggle for socialism in West Europe. Unless this takes place, Western Europe will be left far behind by these sweeping world developments.

Cole rejected outright the idea, advanced against any Socialist-Communist joint action, that there was nothing in common between democratic socialism and communism, that they could not find a common language.

He wrote:

> "However sharply different Communism and Social Democracy, or Democratic Socialism may be in their philosophies and methods of action, it is undeniable that they do have certain common elements—for example—advocacy of public ownership and control of the essential resources and instruments of production and a belief in the historic mission of the working class in bringing about the transition from capitalism to public enterprise. The question whether this is to be done by revolutionary seizure of power by the workers, or by a party purporting to represent them, or by a peaceable conquest of power by parliamentary action under universal suffrage, however important it may be, cannot present itself in the same form in all countries, for on the one hand, not all possess the parliamentary institutions of self-government which the second of these measures pre-supposes, and, on the other, in some that do possess these institutions there is no real question of revolution by violence, or of the resort to one-party dictatorship" (IV, II, p. 848).

This was the essence of Cole's position, the result, as it were, of his enquiry into Socialist thought. No point is served, however one wishes unity, by avoiding discussion of issues of principle.

Public Ownership and State Power

Two big issues are involved here. Does Social Democracy stand for public ownership and control of the essential resources and instruments of production and the historic mission of the working class in bringing about the transition from capitalism to public enterprise? The Communists do. So did Cole. So does the mass of the members of the Labour Party. But do the right-wing leaders controlling the Social Democratic organisations hold this view? The present policy of the right-wing leaders of the Labour Party as presented in *Plan for Progress* and the recent Labour policy declarations is that of managed capitalism. It has nothing to do with public ownership. It involves no change in the social system, no transition from capitalism to public enterprise.

Cole not only condemned the two Labour Governments of MacDonald: in *World Socialism Restated* he said that the legacy left by the 1945 Labour Government was a capitalist economic system with a nationalised sector, "in short, not socialism, but a welfare state with a sector of public ownership". But if Labour's nationalisation is not socialism, what is it? Cole himself recognised that *after* this type of nationalisation there remained the problem of "socialising the new property claims" which the terms of compensation to the former capitalist owners involved. In other words, it was capitalist nationalisation. Not only has the Labour Party leadership no intention of "socialising the new property claims", it has abandoned even the 1945 ideas of nationalisation. It now stands committed without any

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doubt to the preservation of capitalism, and has dropped even the pretence of socialist ideology.

The struggle for socialism in Britain therefore demands the victory in the Labour movement of the forces which stand for socialism. Can this be done without an organised party in Britain, part of the Labour movement, but with a socialist ideology and outlook capable of giving leadership to these forces? That party is the Communist Party. Each attempt to create an alternative in the Labour movement—the Independent Labour Party or the various left movements—has not succeeded. The whole future of socialism in Britain is bound up with the building of a mass Communist Party.

Equally involved is the problem of state power. Cole faced this in considering the revolutionary situation after the First World War. But this is the vital issue for advance to socialism in Britain and any country, whatever the form of the political struggle. This is what "the conquest of power" means. However achieved, the transition of which Cole writes is a social revolution. The only countries where such a transition has taken place are where the working class has been led by the Communist Party. This indeed is the inescapable conclusion of Cole's study. And he advocated unity with the mass Communist Parties of France and Italy not only for the immediate demands, but also because "Socialism cannot possibly be achieved, or any substantial advance towards it made, without their collaboration. . . ." (*World Socialism Restated*).

The Social Democratic thesis of the "neutral" state merely disguises the fact that under previous Labour governments, state power has always remained in the hands of the monopolists. This is the fundamental reason why Britain does not advance to Socialism. The "conquest of power" to which Cole refers only has reality if it means depriving the monopolists of state power and the creation of a Socialist State.

Conditions now more Favourable

With the profound historic changes which have taken place and the decisive switch in the balance of forces, more favourable conditions exist for the victory of Socialism. The monopolists can now be isolated and broad sections of the people united under the leadership of the working class, for national independence, the defence of freedom and living standards and against war and for profound social reforms.

The Communists, said the Declaration of the leading Communist Parties adopted in Moscow in November 1957:

> "seek to achieve the socialist revolution by peaceful means." It went on . . . "Today in a number of capitalist countries the working class, headed by its vanguard, has the opportunity, given a united working class and popular front or other workable forms of agreement and political co-operation between the different parties and public organisations, to unite the majority of the people, win state power without civil war and ensure the transfer of the basic means of production to the hands of the people." The aim was . . . "to secure a firm majority in Parliament, transform Parliament from an instrument serving the class interests of the bourgeoisie into an instrument serving the people." This depends on the political struggle inside and outside Parliament, defeating opportunism and compromise with capitalism in the working class movement and defeating the resistance of the anti-popular forces, creating the necessary conditions for peaceful realisation of the socialist revolution.

This was the view advanced six years earlier in *The British Road to Socialism* by our Party. Can any serious Labour worker see socialism coming in Britain by any other means? The question of force depends not on the working class, but on the ruling class, whether they recognise or resist the democratically expressed will of the people. The need for such a warning hardly requires stressing after the De Gaulle coup in France.

Communists seek co-operation with the Socialist Parties not only in the struggle for immediate demands, but also in the struggle for winning political power and building socialism. In those countries where there are traditional Social Democratic Parties the Communists seek to solve the problems of transition to socialism in co-operation with those parties.

That is why our Programme advanced the view that the Socialist Government in Britain should be based on the organised Labour movement, a parliamentary majority of Communist and Socialists—a government based on the Communist and Labour Parties, or a united working class party based on Marxism if that has been achieved.

Equally, however, such a strategy depends on the two-fold achievement of the creation of a mass Communist Party and the defeat of opportunist ideology by the militant and socialist forces within the Labour Party. Cole would probably have denied this, but surely it is the lesson of *A History of Socialist Thought*.

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Congress of the Builders of Communism

Gordon McLennan

THE Twenty-First Extraordinary Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is a landmark in the development of the international working class movement, and its results will decisively influence the course of world history.

The Seven-Year Plan adopted by the Congress will result in the Soviet Union being the most advanced industrial country in the world, with the highest level of culture, living standards and the shortest working week yet known to mankind, for its 200 million citizens. The successful achievement of the plan will have a profound effect on international relations in that it will provide more favourable conditions for averting a world war and for preserving peace on earth. The plan will provide a powerful moral support for the international Workers' and Communist movement and for all democrats in their struggle against reaction and imperialism.

The U.S.S.R. has now entered the stage of communist construction, and the Twenty-First Congress of the C.P.S.U. has developed Marxist theory on the problem of the transition from Socialism to Communism. The Soviet people led by their Communist Party, united as never before, are entering a new and decisive period in their glorious history. They will blaze the trail to a communist society and in the course of doing so will make a further gigantic contribution to the onward march of humanity.

The Economic Position Today

In 1958 the U.S.S.R. had a gross industrial output equal to thirty-six times that of 1913. The rate of growth of industrial production that this represents is nine times greater than that achieved by the United States in the same period.

Fifty-five million tons of steel and 113 million tons of oil were produced in 1958, and three days' production of electric power in that year was equivalent to what was produced in Russia in the whole of 1913.

The recent changes in the structure of Soviet industry arising from the establishment of Economic Councils has accelerated economic development, made production more efficient, ensured better use of natural resources and of the potentialities of industry, and encouraged the maximum initiative on the part of all workers and technicians.

Remarkable progress has also been made in agriculture. In 1958 the state procured 97 million tons of grain or 44 million tons more than in 1953; in the last five years grain output has increased by a mean annual average of 39 per cent compared with the previous five-year period. Similar substantial successes have also been scored in the output of other crops such as sugar beet and cotton. Since 1953 milk production has doubled; meat has risen by 56 per cent and wool by 60 per cent.

All this is proof that today the Soviet Union has a powerful, versatile industry and transport and a highly mechanised socialist agriculture.

The material welfare of the Soviet people is steadily increasing on the basis of the general expansion of socialist economy and the growth of labour productivity. In 1958, the real incomes of factory and office workers were almost double the 1940 figure, and real incomes in agriculture increased even more.

In the U.S.S.R. the training of technicians, scientists and other specialists surpasses anything ever achieved in capitalist society. The enrolment at Soviet institutions of learning is almost four times greater than in Britain, France, Western Germany and Italy taken together, and three times more engineers are being trained in the Soviet Union now than in the higher schools of the U.S.A.

A vivid demonstration of how high the industrial and technical level of the Soviet Union has risen was given in the successful launching of the world's first earth satellites in 1957, followed by the successful launching in the first few days of 1959 of a multi-stage space rocket in the direction of the moon and now orbiting round the sun.

The principal tasks of the new period now before the Soviet Union are to establish the material and technical base of Communism, to further strengthen the economic and defensive might of the U.S.S.R., and at the same time to provide for the fuller satisfaction of the growing material and spiritual requirements of the people. The leading capitalist countries will be overtaken and surpassed in *per capita* output.

These aims will, however, require a time span longer than that envisaged for the Seven-Year Plan, but the plan now adopted is an important part of this long-term economic and cultural programme.

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The Industrial Aims of the Seven-Year Plan

The Seven-Year Plan envisages a high rate of development and a large absolute increase in production in all spheres of industry, particularly heavy industry.

By 1965 gross industrial output will be 80 per cent greater than in 1958, made up of an 85-88 per cent increase in the output of means of production and 62-65 per cent in consumer goods.

These figures involve the production by 1965 of 65-70 million tons of pig-iron, 86-91 million tons of steel and 65-70 million tons of rolled metal.

Provision is made in the plan for the construction of the world's biggest blast-furnaces with a volume of over 2,000 cubic metres, open-hearth furnaces with a capacity exceeding 500 tons, 180-ton electric furnaces and continuous automated rolling mills with an annual capacity of 3-4 million tons; new technological processes will increase productivity.

These and many other developments in the metallurgical industry necessitate more iron-ore production, and it is planned to double the present output, making the Soviet Union the biggest iron-ore producer in the world.

The Seven-Year Plan gives a position of special importance to the chemical industry, as the rapid development of this industry will ensure the most effective use of the country's wealth and further technical progress in every branch of the national economy. The total output of chemical products will increase three times, the output of artificial fibres four times, plastics and tars almost seven times, and mineral fertilisers from 12 million tons in 1958 to 35 million tons in 1965.

In the fuel industry, the production of oil will double to 230-240 million tons; gas output will go up five-fold, and this will result in the share of oil and gas in the total output of fuel growing from a third to over half, while that of coal will correspondingly shrink from 60 to 43 per cent.

This replacement of coal by natural gas and oil will result in great saving in the national economy, as the undernoted example shows. At present, Moscow consumes 4,000 million cubic metres of gas and about 6 million tons of coal annually. Towards the end of the seven-year period, the supply of gas to the capital will be raised to over 13,000 million cubic metres while coal consumption will fall to 700,000 tons per year. This change in fuel consumption in Moscow will result in a saving of 5,000 million roubles in seven years, and similar developments throughout the whole of the Soviet Union will save the country more than 125,000 million roubles.

This is as much money as is necessary for the construction of all the power stations and power and thermal grids to be built in the course of the plan.

The new importance attached to oil and gas production does not mean that the coal industry will be neglected. It is true that the rate of growth in that industry will be lower than that in the preceding seven years but output will rise by 20-23 per cent in the course of the next seven years by increasing the extraction of coking coals in the Donbas, Kuzbas and Karaganda basins, as well as the cheap power coals in the Eastern Areas.

The Soviet Union is now entering the decisive stage of Lenin's idea of the country's complete electrification. With an 80 per cent rise in industrial output, power consumption in industry will increase by 120 per cent and therefore the electric power output must rise to 500,000 million kilowatt-hours a year, and the capacity of the power stations must be more than doubled.

The Seven-Year Plan, therefore, calls for the priority construction of thermal power stations plus the construction of hydro-power stations in many regions. The building of these new large power stations involves the extension of the power grids, and these will be further unified into large power systems, with a view to establishing a single power system in the Soviet Union that will give all regions of the U.S.S.R. a stable supply of electric power. Several nuclear power stations with different kinds of reactors will also come into operation in this period.

Under the Seven-Year Plan, all modern branches of the engineering industry, primarily heavy machine-building, instrument making and the production of automated and electronic devices, will develop at an accelerated pace and all engineering factories will be re-equipped where necessary with new machines, forges and presses.

The high level attained by heavy industry and the realisation of the measures to promote agriculture will make it possible to bring about a substantial rise in the output of foodstuffs and consumer goods. The output of cotton fabrics will increase by a third, of woollen fabrics by two-thirds. Meat output will more than double, and there will be big increases in the output of milk, sugar and fish. More than 1,600 food and light industry factories will be built to cope with the assignments for producing more and better consumer goods and foodstuffs.

The overall rapid growth of the national economy will require a big increase in freight carriage. In 1965, the freight turnover of the railways will be a third higher than in 1958, and there will be a fundamental technical reconstruction of the basic means of transport, particularly the railways, where steam engines will be replaced by electric and diesel locomotives. All the trunk lines, totalling nearly 100,000 kilometres in length, will be switched over to electric and diesel traction towards the end of the seven-year period, and the traffic capacity of these lines will be nearly doubled. All other means of transport will be increased, and all sections of the population will

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have the means of communication that they need.

The seven-year targets can only be achieved on the basis of a broad application of new technique, comprehensive mechanisation and automation of production processes, and specialisation and co-ordination in all branches of the national economy.

Khrushchov concluded this section of his report by saying:

> "Comrades, the tasks are enormous. There is much to be done to consolidate the industrial might of the Soviet State still further and to raise industry to a much higher technical level. There can be no doubt that displaying creative initiative and developing socialist emulation on a still broader scale, the heroic working class and the scientists, technicians and engineers will successfully reach and go beyond the targets of the Seven-Year Plan."

The Seven-Year Plan for Agriculture

A steep rise in socialist agriculture will be a tremendous contribution towards communist construction and the people's living standard. In 1959-65 the gross output of agriculture will rise by 70 per cent. The output of grain, flax, cotton, sugar-beet will be a third higher, wool two-thirds higher. Supplies of milk, fruit and eggs will increase rapidly.

High rates of growth in agricultural production are based on the tremendous advantages of the socialist system of economy, which is supplying all the necessary material and technical facilities for large-scale mechanised agriculture. Within the next seven years, agriculture will be supplied with more than a million tractors, 400,000 grain combines and numerous other machines and equipment. Electric power capacities at the disposal of collective and state farms will be almost doubled.

The electrification of all collective farms will be completed in the main by 1965, while the electrification of the state farms will be completed much earlier. Almost four times more electric power will be consumed in the countryside and thus another stride will be taken in raising the culture and improving the life of the collective farm village.

Capital Investments and Construction

In the next seven years state capital investments will be close to 2,000,000 million roubles. If added to this is the construction financed by non-centralised funds, the capital investments by the collective farms and housing construction by individual Soviet citizens, the total capital investment runs into 3,000,000 million roubles.

This means that in the next seven years there will be invested as much as was invested in all preceding Soviet years.

With capital investments in the national economy as a whole rising by 80 per cent, investments in industry will approximately double, and in agriculture nearly double as compared with the previous seven years.

The plan provides state funds for the building of 15 million flats in the towns, and in addition 7 million homes will be built in the countryside—a total of 22 million, or over 3 million a year. As the population of the Soviet Union is about four times the size of the British population, this would be the equivalent in Britain of 750,000 dwellings a year. There are also large allocations for the building of schools, hospitals and other cultural and medical establishments, and for the building of boarding schools and child welfare establishments.

It is important to note that over 40 per cent of all capital investment will be so channelled as to ensure fuller use of the natural resources of the eastern areas of the country. The Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union pointed to the need for enlisting the huge raw material and power resources of the eastern areas into the country's economy and this directive is being successfully implemented.

The country's third iron and steel centre is being built in Siberia and Kazakhstan, the world's largest hydro-power stations are going up on the Angara and the Yenisei Rivers, and the successes in developing virgin and disused land will be extended.

While these developments in the eastern areas proceed the European part of the U.S.S.R. will be further developed and its raw material and power resources considerably reinforced.

Every region and every republic of the U.S.S.R. will make giant strides in the development of its economy and well-being in the next seven years. The plan provides for the most efficient use of the resources of each republic and of the Soviet Union as a whole. The plan therefore calls for the strengthening of inter-republican ties, the extension of the socialist division of labour and the friendship of all the peoples of the multi-national socialist state, for this is the cornerstone of the Soviet Union's might and invincible strength.

The Living Standards of the Soviet People

The Seven-Year Plan provides for a growth of the real incomes of the people of 40 per cent, a shorter working day and working week, with higher wages, improvement in the supply and quality of consumer goods, and a substantial improvement of housing and public, cultural and other services.

At present an insignificant proportion of state revenue, 7.8 per cent, is paid by the population in the form of taxes, *and it is proposed that such taxation be discontinued in the next few years.*

Higher living standards and improved health services have lengthened the average life span, and in recent years the Soviet Union has had the world's

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lowest mortality rate, while the increase in population has been higher than in most countries.

Reduction of the working day has always been one of the Communist Party's programmatic goals, and the Seven-Year Plan will give Soviet men and women the shortest working day in the world. By 1960 all factory and office workers will transfer to a seven-hour day, and workers working underground in mining to a six-hour day.

Starting from 1964, workers engaged in underground work and on work involving harmful labour conditions will gradually go over to a 30-hour week, and the rest of the workers to a 35-hour week. It has always been natural practice in the Soviet Union to work a six-day week, but in order to give the majority of workers two full days off per week it is proposed to introduce for the majority of Soviet workers a five-day working week with a six- or seven-hour day.

It is usual to consider that discussion involving figures, targets and aims is an extremely dull affair, but can that be said of the discussion of the control figures for the Seven-Year Plan?

In the discussion of Khrushchov's report A. I. Mikoyan spoke for all delegates and for the people of the Soviet Union and progressive people of the world when he said: "No—these target figures and aims are not dull, Comrade Khrushchov's report sounded like a magnificent Symphony of Communist Construction."

The Economic Competition Between Capitalism and Socialism

The Seven-Year Plan is a decisive step towards the aim of accomplishing the basic economic task of the U.S.S.R.—to overtake and outstrip the most advanced capitalist countries in output per head of the population.

At present the volume of Soviet industrial production is about half of that of the U.S.A., and in agriculture Soviet production is 20-25 per cent lower. In the United States industrial output per head of the population is more than double that of the U.S.S.R., and agricultural output about 40 per cent higher.

In terms of the rates of growth of production the advantage rests with the socialist economic system, for the mean annual industrial rates of growth since the revolution have been three to five times higher than that of the most advanced capitalist countries.

The Soviet Union will, after fulfilling the present plan, surpass the United States for physical output in some key lines, and draw near to America's present level of output in others. By that time the output of major agricultural products, both physical and per head of the population, will exceed the present U.S. level.

Taking into account the growth of population in the two countries and the fact that this growth will be 15-20 per cent higher in the U.S.S.R., it will probably take the Soviet Union a further five years after the fulfilment of the plan to catch up and surpass the United States in industrial production. *Consequently by that time—or even earlier—the Soviet Union will rank first in the world both for physical volume of production and production per head of population.*

This will be a world historical victory for socialism in its peaceful competition with capitalism in the international arena.

This peaceful competition is not only taking place between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., but also between the world socialist system and the world capitalist system.

In 1958 industrial output in the socialist countries was five times that of 1937, and in the years 1950-58 the Chinese People's Republic raised its industrial output almost ten-fold. Some people's democracies have already reached the stage of completing the construction of socialism, and the time is near when, like the Soviet Union, they will be building a communist society. This is of great international importance.

The world socialist system as a whole has already caught up the world capitalist system in industrial output per head of the population. The socialist countries with about one-third of the world population, produce more than one-third of the world industrial output, nearly half the world grain output and 43 per cent of the world's cotton output.

By the time the Seven-Year Plan is completed in the Soviet Union, and other socialist countries have carried through their plans covering that period, the world socialist system will account for more than half the world industrial output. The superiority of the world socialist system over the world capitalist system in material production will thereby be ensured.

The Preservation of World Peace

The importance of the Seven-Year Plan lies, firstly, in the fact that it is imbued with the spirit of peace.

A state which undertakes such a gigantic programme of construction, at the same time as substantially raising the living standards of its people, will be seen by all who are not blinded by cold-war propaganda as a state which seeks peace, not war.

The economic growth of the U.S.S.R., together with that of the socialist countries, will result in a situation where peace will have a decisive edge in the international balance of forces. Thus it will be seen that new and even more favourable conditions for averting a world war, for preserving peace on earth, will take shape. Today, the conclusion of the Twentieth Congress of the C.P.S.U.—that war is not fatally inevitable—can be reaffirmed.

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The world situation will change radically when the world socialist system produces more than one-half of the world industrial output, for by that time also the countries working for lasting peace will be joined by new countries that have thrown off the yoke of colonial oppression. Backed by the might of the socialist camp, the peaceful nations will then be able to compel aggressive imperialist groups to abandon their plans of a new world war.

In this way, a real possiblity of excluding world war from the life of society will take shape even before the universal triumph of socialism, with capitalism still existing in some parts of the world. It is true that as long as capitalism exists there will still be the danger of war, but any attempt at aggression can and will be curbed by the powerful forces of peace throughout the world.

The International Working Class Movement

At present, there are Communist and Workers' Parties in eighty-three countries, with a membership of more than 33 million.

Dozens of campaigns have been waged against communism, but nothing can destroy the Communist movement, for it is an offspring of the class struggle of the proletariat, of all working people, and it represents their interests.

Today there are sinister signs in the capitalist countries of a growth of reaction and fascism, and the people must be ever ready to repel the reactionary offensive and the threat of resurgent fascism.

It is precisely in the struggle against reaction and fascism that Communists and Social Democrats should find a common language. It is high time for the representatives of all trends in the Labour movement to get rid of the purveyors of anti-communism, and to sit round one table to work out a mutually acceptable platform of joint working class action in defence of their interests, in defence of peace.

It is imperative, in the name of further progress, for the Communist and Workers' Parties to reinforce their ranks ideologically and organisationally, to strengthen their unity on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, and to consolidate their fraternal international connections.

In the period since the meeting of representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties in November 1957, the contentions of the revisionists have been refuted by life, by the practical struggle of the working class, by the entire process of social development.

The international Communist movement has criticised the views and policies of the Yugoslav revisionists, for they deny the need for international working class solidarity and they have abandoned working class positions.

Imperialist ideologists, and the revisionists who take their cue from them, strive in every way to undermine the growing influence of the Communist Parties and spread the spurious tale about the Communist movement being "made in Moscow", and about the Communist and Workers' Parties being dependent upon the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Yugoslav revisionists are particularly zealous in this regard.

Anyone who knows the Communist movement will have little difficulty in smashing these spurious tales, for it is ridiculous to think that a political Party of the working class which comes into being with the growth of the working class in any country, and represents the interests of that working class, can be told from outside what they are to think today and do tomorrow.

Some say that the "dependence" of the Communist and Workers' Parties on Moscow is corroborated by statements to the effect that the C.P.S.U. stands at the head of the international Communist movement. This tribute was paid to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, its heroic working class and people, because they were the first to carry out the socialist revolution and in forty years of difficult struggle have made untold sacrifices in the interests of the entire international working class movement. It must be emphasised, however, that there has always been complete independence and equality for all the Communist and Workers' Parties in the Communist movement, and for all the socialist countries in the socialist camp.

Only a Marxist-Leninist Party closely linked with the working class, with the people of its own country, is able to know the concrete conditions of struggle; it alone can work out a political line conforming to these conditions and taking account of the traditions of the working class movement in its own country.

Concern for the solidarity and strength of our ranks is the supreme international duty of each Communist and Workers' Party. *Success in the national cause of the working class is inconceivable without the international solidarity of all its detachments.*

Theoretical Problems in the New Stage of Communist Construction

In his report Comrade Khrushchov dealt with this question at some length and it is only possible for me in this article to mention some of the main propositions he formulated.

The founders of scientific communism—Marx, Engels, Lenin—indicated that following the overthrow of capitalist and landlord domination, society would pass through two stages. The first would be socialism and the second, higher stage, classless communist society.

Notwithstanding all the differences between the communist and socialist phases, there is no wall

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separating these two stages of social development. Communism stems from socialism as its direct continuation and it would be wrong to believe that communism will somehow appear on the scene suddenly. Under socialism, some communist forms of labour and industrial organisation develop, and this will be a continuous process. Therefore the Seven-Year Plan will be a period in which there will be extensive communist construction, and one in which all the material and spiritual conditions for communism are being created.

Communist construction will be completed when there is provided an abundance of everything needed to satisfy man's requirements, and when all will learn to work according to their ability so as to accumulate and multiply the wealth of the community.

It will, however, take some time for people to acquire an ingrained urge to work in accordance with their abilities. Until then, society cannot dispense with a certain regulation of working time in order that every able-bodied citizen contributes a definite amount of labour to the production of values the community needs.

Regulated distribution of the social product among the members of society only disappears under communism, when the productive forces have reached a stage of expansion sufficient to provide an abundance of all the necessary consumer goods.

The continued development of the productive forces will tend to raise the degree of socialisation of collective farm production, and bring collective-farm-co-operative property into closer approximation with public property, gradually obliterating the dividing line between the two.

This merger of collective-farm-co-operative property with state property into an integral public property is not a simple organisational and economic measure, but is the solution of the cardinal problem of bridging the essential distinction between town and country.

Also as socialist production is extended on a new material and technical base, and as education is more closely linked with productive labour, the essential distinctions between mental and physical labour will disappear. Under communism the state will wither away—this is an essential part of Marxist-Leninist theory. This implies the development of the socialist state into communist public self-administration, for under communism, too, there will remain certain public functions similar to those now performed by the state, but their nature and the methods by which they will be exercised will differ.

How will socialist countries continue their advance towards communism? Is it possible to envisage a situation when one of the socialist countries passes to communism and introduces the communist principles of production and distribution, while other countries are left trailing behind somewhere in the early stages of communist construction?

That prospect is highly improbable, and it would be more correct to assume that the socialist countries will more or less simultaneously pass to the higher phase of communist society.

The Communist Party

In the period since the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union the Communist Party in that country has strengthened its ties with the masses, decisively increased its membership, implemented a series of major measures in home and foreign policy, continued its work of re-establishing and extending the Leninist standards of Party life, and defeated all attempts to take the Party away from the line of the Twentieth Congress.

The implementation of this line was resisted by the anti-Party group of Malenkov, Kaganovich, Molotov, Bulganin and Shepilov, but this group was routed and the Party has united its ranks still closer around the Central Committee.

All the experience gained in the battle for the triumph of socialism and communism corroborates one of the key principles of Leninism, namely, that in the process of building communist society the role of the Party must increase. The Communist Party, the highest form of social organisation, the leading detachment and trusted vanguard of the people, gives leadership to all other sections of the working people.

Today the Communist Party is leading the people of the Soviet Union to a great new era in the history of mankind. They are storming the heavens with high hearts and invincible optimism and confidence.

Many generations of mankind have dreamed of a brighter future, of a society that would not be divided into rich and poor, in which men of labour would not be oppressed.

That dream was of communism.

H. G. Wells, after a visit to the U.S.S.R. and a talk with Lenin, described Lenin as "the dreamer of the Kremlin". Yes, Lenin was the world's greatest dreamer, for by his life's work he laid the indestructible basis that would make his dreams come true. If he were alive today he would see the great Soviet people, led by their glorious Communist Party, making his dream a reality, and in doing so helping humanity all over the world to reach their goal of socialism and communism.

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Why the Free Trade Area Fiasco?

J. R. Campbell

YET another of the Tory Government's projects—the European Free Trade Area—lies in ruins and a desperate search is going on for a substitute. The Commission of the Common Market is discussing a policy which will enable the Market to associate with the other European countries which have been left out in the cold. In addition, talks are proceeding between the British and French Governments to discover whether a compromise policy is possible. Seldom has a much boosted panacea come to such a miserable end. For two whole years the Tories tried to convince British industrialists and British trade unions that the Free Trade Area was in the bag. Employers and managers in each of the thousand industrial associations, which cover the British capitalist economy, discussed in detail how the new set-up would affect their particular industry. The farmers debated how British agriculture would fit into the scheme and the Trades Union Congress came in to demand the usual safeguards for the workers. In fact Government, employers and Right-Wing Labour leaders were agreed that this was a progressive move. The Labour opposition, whose duty it was to apply the sharpest possible criticism to all Government projects, completely failed to do so. Only the Communist Party criticised the Free Trade Area from the point of view of the interest of the British people and stressed the fierce antagonisms which divided the West European capitalist states.

Neither Government nor Opposition have told us why their much boosted project collapsed. The best that Mr. Reginald Maudling, who has been in charge of the negotiations, can say is that they "failed because the will to agree failed, and because the determination to succeed faltered. The basic premise upon which we started, that all of us wished to establish a Free Trade Area, no longer remained true." As a reason why negotiations failed this tells us precisely nothing. Surely negotiations about trade reflect a struggle between diverse interests. What we want to know is what states resisted the formation of a Free Trade Area and why? I believe that the basic blunder of the Tories is that they are refusing both in political and economic questions to draw the appropriate conclusions from the re-emergence of West German monopoly capitalism to dominance in Western Europe in the last few years. Throughout the negotiations all attention was concentrated on France, as the state which had to be convinced of the beauties of the Free Trade Area. The West Germans, on the other hand, were treated as belated converts to free trade possibilities. Had not their Economics Minister, Dr. Erhard, talked about "prosperity through competition"? Yet at the decisive moment it was West German support of the French which wrecked the negotiations.

Previous Proposals

Anyone fit to conduct trade negotiations should at least have been familiar with the previous proposals for customs unions and closer economic unity in Europe put forward by the Germans. The most famous customs union in European history was, of course, the Zollverein which was formed by Prussia in the 1830's and which lasted up to the formation of the German empire in 1871. There is no need to go into the details of this organisation, except to say that it was at one and the same time an economic organisation and a political instrument. It served to attach the smaller German states closer to Prussia, and alienate them from Austria, then Prussia's rival for the leadership of the German states.

It should be stressed that to accomplish its purposes, Prussia was prepared to make economic concessions in order to secure the allegiance of the smaller states to the Zollverein. We will note the similar tactics of West Germany in relation to the Common Market.

The next proposal was made by the German National-Liberal Friedrich Neumann, in his celebrated book *Mittel-Europa,* which appeared in the middle of the First World War. It was a proposal for a customs union between the German Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Around these two empires there would be a tariff wall separating them from the rest of the world and the tariff walls separating the one empire from the other would be wiped out. When Neumann was making his proposals German industry was enormously more efficient than Austrian industry. How then could the latter expose itself to fierce competition

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by lowering its tariff walls? Neumann's answer was that the industries of Germany and Austria could be organised into cartels where they could share the market, so giving the less efficient industry the necessary time to adapt itself to the new situation. Once again the importance of getting the proposals accepted was so great that the German monopolists were prepared to make concessions. This project was ended by the defeat of the German Empire in 1918.

We can skip Hitler's "New Order in Europe" because this was not so much an economic arrangement as a systematic looting of the economies of the conquered countries in the interest of the Nazi war economies.

But it could be argued that these past projects are irrelevant, because the Common Market is not a German conception. It was the Benelux countries and France who first drove for it. This is true enough but the growth of West German economic and political strength is such that they can dominate economic arrangements originally designed by other people. The fate of the European Coal and Steel Community—which arose out of the French Schuman Plan—is a case in point. This was one of a number of arrangements (the defunct European Defence Community was another) for integrating Germany into "European" institutions, so that its economic and political expansion could be controlled in order that it would not expand at a more rapid rate than the French. A High Authority—with the Germans in a minority—would control the expansion of all heavy industries within the Community and would, it was believed, operate to restrict German development. The European Coal and Steel Community is functioning today, but it has not done what the French expected it to do. German heavy industry since the inauguration of the Community has expanded much faster than the French. In 1951 France produced 9,800,000 metric tons of crude steel and in 1957 14 million metric tons. In the same period West German production of crude steel advanced from 13,500,000 metric tons in 1951 to 24,500,000 metric tons in 1957. These figures speak for themselves.

The Common Market is a Customs Union as well as an Economic Union. In its aspect as a Customs Union it will gradually build up a Common Market tariff separating the countries concerned from the outside world and will gradually lower the tariffs between the Market states, until there is free trade inside the Customs Union. Freer trade will permit the movement of capital and labour across the frontiers of the participating states. It is expected to complete this arrangement within seventeen years. The Common Market will be the second largest trading unit in the world. Its exports (including trade between the Market states) were £4,500 million in 1955, as compared with £5,500 million for the United States and £2,900 million for the United Kingdom. The Market's population today is 161 million. In 1970 it will be 173 million.

In its Economic Union aspect the Market implies that the governments concerned will harmonise their social policies, though how far this will extend no one really knows.

Social Services

It is expected that quite early in the development of the Market the French rates of overtime, the French principle of equal pay for women, the bringing of social service charges into closer approximation with each other will begin to operate. (Lest anyone should get enthusiastic about equal pay for women, we should remember that by British standards the French male worker gets a comparatively low wage, though high family allowances raise the family income considerably.)

It will be noted that these arrangements imply a very considerable restriction of the power of governments and parliaments of the states concerned, over a wide number of questions. We know of course that no government, least of all a capitalist government, can act completely independently of the international situation and to that extent its freedom of action is limited. That is, however, a vastly different thing from a government transferring its power to legislate to institutions outside the control of any individual government or parliament.

The internal economic policy that will be operated in the Market is not yet formulated in a cut and dried scheme. The Council of Ministers will decide the policy. Some of its basic decisions have to be made unanimously and some by what is called a qualified majority. So it looks quite difficult for West Germany to act on economic policy without convincing the other governments in the Council. In such top level bodies, however, it is not merely votes but economic and military power that counts and here the West German weight is overwhelming. Besides it is unlikely that Germany is relying on legislative decisions to win for it the advantages which it hopes to gain from the Market. So long as West German industry has more elbow room in the Market than it had in the previously existing set-up it can achieve all that it wants. It is because the Common Market is a reincarnation, under more favourable circumstances, of some of the past projects of German monopoly capitalism, that this project is so menacing to third countries.

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As far as Britain is concerned, the industries of every one of the Market countries will be placed at an advantage in selling their goods in the Market as compared with this country. This could mean a considerable loss of an important British market which at present amounts in round figures to about £380 million per year.

It should be noted that the shift from textiles to engineering, aircraft, motors, electronics and atomic energy underlines the fact that Britain must seek a large part of its markets in highly developed industrial countries. So British imperialism will suffer a substantial defeat if it allows itself to be expelled from important West European markets. In the long run it would also have an important effect on British-German competition in third markets. If Western Germany can achieve a superiority in certain lines of production it could become the effective price leader within the Market. It would be in a position to charge more for those goods within the Market than it would if subjected to British competition. It would then be able to resort to cut price rates outside the Market, in order to extend its trade into new areas.

The basic mistake of the British Government was its inability to understand that the Common Market and the Free Trade Area are two basically antagonistic conceptions. It is true that the Common Market in one of its aspects means freer trade between the participating countries. In another aspect, however, it means the creation of a larger market, protected from the rest of the world. Cynical people have noted that the British Government did not think of the Free Trade Area until it became clear that the Common Market was about to be established. The Free Trade Area to their mind was a device of the British Government, not only for warding off the dangers which the Market creates for British trade, but was also a device for muscling in on the Common Market and getting some of its benefits on the cheap. The French monopolists might reason as follows—"We have only come into the Common Market because we have been able to extract special concessions from the Germans. They have allowed us to take special steps to protect French trade. They have also agreed to invest in the French colonies and maybe in the backward regions of France. They have agreed that industries suffering as a result of the formation of the Common Market should be assisted to reorganise, that workers would be helped to change their jobs and that social service conditions should be harmonised. We have got all these conditions in return for agreeing to open the French market to our collaborators. Yet here is Britain, which has made no concessions, coming forward with a scheme which will enable it to enjoy most of the advantages of the Common Market without paying anything for them."

From the point of view of the West Germans the same type of argument could be employed. They are agreeing to invest in France, to harmonise their social services and working conditions with those of France, which could mean some increase in industrial costs, to henceforth pursue with France and the other states a common economic policy on internal affairs and Britain, which has done none of these things, wants access to the Common Market on the same terms as them. Obviously if a Free Trade Area was all that was required there was no need for a common internal economic policy at all. If on the other hand the Common Market is both a Customs Union and an Economic Union, its very basis was that it would give its members economic concessions that it would not give to non-members.

The British Government's wail about discrimination was silly. Of course the Market discriminates against non-members, but so would the suggested Free Trade Area, and besides Britain could have joined the ranks of the discriminators by joining the Market.

To Neutralise Britain

Why then did the Market countries declare in favour of a Free Trade Area and engage in prolonged negotiations about it? It could be that they did not at first realise what a Free Trade Area would involve and when they did they rejected it. My own opinion is that Britain was deliberately "led up the garden". If it had come out against the Common Market right from the inception it could have made its formation much more difficult than it was. So from the point of view of the Market strategists it was useful to neutralise Britain until the Market became a "going concern". Then it would be time enough to reject the Free Trade Area. They could then argue that as Britain had never come out against the Common Market in the past it was too late to do so now.

In their last statement on the Free Trade Area, issued in October 1958, the states of the Common Market suggest that the entire term "Free Trade Area" should be dropped "because from the point of view of doctrine the term 'free trade' evokes a specific economic system." They suggest the substitute term "European Economic Association." When they come to describe the functions of this body it is clear that they are proposing something almost identical to the Common Market itself. If anyone had sat down to concoct a document full

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of propositions which they knew beforehand that the British Government could not possibly accept, they could have done no more.

Right at the heart of the document there is a reference to the British Empire which must have caused palpitations in Downing Street.

The Common Market states:

> "wish to emphasise the existence of the sterling area and the Commonwealth is an important factor for the economic prosperity of all European countries.
>
> *"It is, however, a fact that the United Kingdom can thus benefit from extensive privileged markets outside Europe in countries which are economically very advanced and expanding rapidly.*
>
> "There is a danger that these privileged markets may disturb conditions of competition for the partners of the Association.
>
> "In addition countries without privileged markets are placed at a disadvantage with regard to foreign investment in their territories. [This means with regard to attracting foreign investment to their territories.] For although markets are not the only factor influencing investment such countries are not in a position to guarantee that industries establishing themselves on their territory will find markets, not only within the Association itself but also in Commonwealth countries.
>
> "The Community wishes to draw the attention of the United Kingdom to these questions. It considers that in specific cases appropriate solutions should be found to those problems." [Italics ours].

Where will New Factories be Built?

This is the key question of where in Europe the factories of the American monopolists should be located. Suppose there is a Common Market only. Then an American factory located in either France, Germany or any of the other Market countries, can send its products duty free into every hole and corner of the Market. But if a Free Trade Area (or European Economic Association, as they want to call it) were formed then it would pay the U.S. monopolists to locate their factories in Britain, for the products of those factories would have free access to (1) the West European capitalist countries, and (2) to the British colonies and dominions.

The Common Market countries are suggesting that as a minimum, if a European Economic Association is formed, any American firm established on the territory of any member of the Association will have access to the markets of the British colonies and the dominions on the same terms as any British firm. This would only be a step towards the demand that all powers in the Association will have the same right to enter the markets of the colonies and empire as any British firm. The "privileged" markets would disappear. Further, the Market states demand that as a condition for forming an Association there should be a "harmonisation" of social conditions and legislation. These are to include (1) equal pay for men and women, (2) equal holiday schemes, (3) equivalence of overtime payments, (4) harmonisation of labour and social laws. There must further be a common trade policy in respect to third countries.

One of the initial differences between the Common Market and the suggested Free Trade Area is that the Common Market is controlled by certain institutions, while the Free Trade Area in the original proposals was not. The Common Market countries will have none of this. The Free Trade Area (or European Economic Association) must be controlled by economic institutions analogous to those existing in the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation. In the first stage decisions would have to be unanimous, but at a later period the principle of majority voting would be introduced. After a certain period there would be free migration of workers throughout the Free Trade Area. The sum total of these principles means that after two years negotiations the positions of the Market states and of Britain are further apart than ever. If the negotiations proceeding do result in a compromise it will be something vastly different from the original conception of the Free Trade Area.

Britain and the Commonwealth

A number of compromise suggestions are being made. The first is that Britain and the Commonwealth states should join the Common Market. We hazard a guess that should this proposition ever be made by British capitalism it would be opposed by some Common Market states like France, which would not welcome new and intensive competition from Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

It is hardly likely to be adopted, however, for its basis is that Britain has to abandon its privileged markets in the colonies and dominions, a proposal which has few supporters amongst the British bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, some of the highly industrialised dominions — for example Canada—might find the proposal attractive.

There is an obscure passage in the statement of the Market states which suggests another possibility. It reads "the existence and functioning of the Community [i.e. the Common Market] cannot be regarded as involving discriminatory treatment in relation to other partners of the Association

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[i.e. the Free Trade Area] but they may result in differences of treatment, which are inherent in the position of such countries." This is a real gem. The Market states tell the others we will not discriminate against you but we will treat you differently. Yet some such proposition is being seriously discussed. There would then be three circles: (1) an inner circle of states [the Common Market] which give each other privileged treatment, (2) a middle circle of states [the European Economic Association] associated with the Common Market, which give each other privileges but not of the comprehensive character of those existing in the Market, and (3) an outer circle of states which have no privileges at all. If this ever emerges there should be complications which will keep the customs services in Western Europe fully employed.

A variant of this is that the excluded states in West Europe should negotiate with the Common Market for reciprocal concessions. The Common Market countries have a market worth £443 million per annum in Britain and might be prepared to give Britain some concessions to retain it. But these would obviously fall far short of the concessions envisaged in the original Free Trade Area proposals.

It will be noted that even if this were achieved it would constitute a West German victory. The special relations which West Germany has established with the other states of the Common Market will remain. The financial and economic hegemony of reviving German monopoly capitalism in West Europe will be strengthened.

The British Government has, however, the possibility also of making a powerful drive for new markets particularly in the socialist world. It is necessary in making this effort to scrap the last remaining bans on trade and to engage in a more generous export credits policy.

There is need to re-examine the whole question of trading relations with the Dominions (old and new) and to see whether the imperial preference arrangements cannot be replaced by some new arrangement for mutual trade and development stripped of many of the exploitative features of the past. If such arrangements annoy America it cannot be helped.

Above all it is necessary to look afresh at the resurgence of West German monopoly capitalism and militarism. Britain has been completely outwitted by it in relation to the Free Trade Area. Yet the policy of the Tories and right-wing Labour leaders leaves Britain open to still more disastrous defeat on the political field. That more than any economic loss is the lesson of the negotiations around the Free Trade Area. We are still being led up more dangerous gardens.

NOTE: The recent change in names of institutions is confusing, particularly because of the close similarity of official names. The European Economic *Community* is the official name for the Common Market. The European Economic Association is the name which the Common Market states were prepared to bestow on the Free Trade Area had it come into existence.

Russian Pictures and Socialist Realism

L. Amaral

NO one should be very surprised that the critics have reacted to the Russian pictures shown at the Royal Academy rather in the vein of outraged passengers on the 8.15 a.m. from Chingford when some upstart intruder opens the window and lets in a draught—the underlying assumptions of contemporary criticism are inadequate to meet the challenge of paintings rooted in a materialist conception of life. In a recent article (*New Statesman*, 13 Dec. 1958) John Berger described this crisis of criticism:

> "The key but artificial question for modern aesthetics is: What is art? Yet since art includes Cologne Cathedral on the one hand, the novels of Zola on the other, this question comes to mean: What is the pure essence of art irrespective of all the particulars of all works? And the answer is: 'Art is not craft and has nothing to do with technique . . . art is the primary self-expression of spirit, a pre-logical spontaneous expression of pure imagination, art is pure subjectivity and this is pure freedom'."

John Berger adds the comment:

> "it turns into a nightmare because in the end the idealist attitude leads to the conclusion that art, instead of meaning a particular job well done, means 'what goes on in people's heads'.

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> "From this in turn derive many of the worst illusions of contemporary Western culture: the idea that 'pure' art should neither represent nor comment; the idea that lyric art is 'purer' than epic art; the idea that art is outside the judgment of reason."

It is not surprising that Idealist Critics and Materialist Painters, flung abruptly into each other's arms, did not get along very happily together: the cosy formulas, tailor-made to fit snugly to the vital statistics of frustrated egos and brutal libidos, did not sit so easily on the shoulders of the Socialist Realists: the canonical liturgy of critical catch-words seemed somehow irrelevant as comment upon this kind of painting.

The critics, for once in their lives, found themselves in the embarrassing position of being at a loss for words.

What were they to do, these High Priests of the Bond Street cults, with their stock-in-trade of magical incantations left upon their hands? What would you expect a bankrupt Witch-Doctor to do? Go down on his knees before the Icons!

But it is really very odd indeed that they should have chosen these Byzantine panels as the peg upon which to hang their sermons on subjective freedom as the essential condition for the creation of works of art, since, in point of fact, the Icon painters were allowed no freedom at all, whether in choice of subject or in manner of treatment. Above all the Churchmen who dictated the character of these religious pictures enforced a strict limitation of their subjective content: fearful lest the ignorant congregations should be led into idolatry, they forbade any attempt to stir the hearts of the worshippers by the introduction of emotive elements. The formal stylisation which has been so loudly acclaimed as a "visual freedom" unknown to artists in Russia today is in fact the outward sign of a rigid control exercised over the minds and hearts of men. Realism was forbidden, not merely frowned upon but forbidden, because realism would open the whole realm of subjective content to the Icon painter.

And in the end, at least, the desire to widen his subjective content, to deepen his emotional appeal, led the Icon painter to hanker after realism. Listen to Joseph, an Icon painter of the 17th century, speaking to the reactionary Churchmen of his day: "Whence comes it then that we are now instructed to represent all saintly visages as swarthy and sombre? Is it that the human race is cast in a single mould? Were all saints dusky and haggard looking?" And he asserts his right, against the Churchmen, to show "the good as fair and comely, the evil as dark, bloody and emaciated". "In foreign lands," says Joseph, "Christ and the Virgin are depicted realistically". . . .

But our critics turn a deaf ear to Joseph, just as the Churchmen did, because they are concerned, as Berger says, with "pure" subjectivity, "pure" freedom—they are haunted by an illusion of "subjective freedom" that transcends objective realities, a freedom that knows no necessity—they regard realism as a hindrance to the development of subjective content when, in fact, it is the only language in which a subjective content can find expression.

To praise pictures for the wrong reason is to cheat them of their authentic claims to admiration. The attempt to treat the stylistic idiosyncracies of the Icon painting of the 14th and 15th centuries as though the peculiarities of this formal mode constitute, in themselves, the essential and sufficient content of these unique panels, serves only to obscure their more enduring merits. Beauty of formal organisation, audacity of design, and mastery of linear rhythm they unquestionably have, but this no more sums up their significance than the metrical refinements of a poem by John Donne add up to its power and its beauty.

Common Humanity

For us today, when we can no longer accept, as we would have done in 14th-century Russia, the social validity of the religious purpose—a social purpose which, in that day, was just as much a conscious motivation as any social intention which animates contemporary Soviet artists—these Icons are living works of art because of values which transcend the religious fervour and the formal qualities of pictorial grammar. They move us, above all, because the common humanity of the long dead painter is always revealing itself in the characterisation of a head or of a gesture. The formal, stylised phrases take on the inflection of a human voice: as an undertone to the chanting of the priestly litanies we catch the accent of realism: the first whispers of the language spoken by the common people of Russia.

Oddly enough that whisper dies away in the generations immediately following Peter the Great's onslaught upon medieval Russia: the brutal midwifery that brought Russia to birth as a nation seems also to have left it speechless. Would a wider representation in this exhibition of the artists of 18th-century Russia correct this impression? On this meagre showing it is hard to decide. Above all one regrets that the terms of an exhibition devoted to "great" pictures necessarily excludes such graphic work as the block-printed Russian equivalent of our chap-books which had enormous popularity among the peasants at this time. An exhibition of English art of the 19th century would equally exclude the wood-engravings that illustrated the magazines of that period, and equally

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impoverish our historical perspective. But on what we are shown we would be led to conclude that Russia was so shocked at being thrown out of the Middle Ages into sophisticated Europe by the scruff of its neck that it took nearly 100 years to recover its breath. Perhaps the heart of the matter is to be found in the rigidity of Orthodox Icon painting, which contained within itself no germ of growth. The Icon painters, frozen in the stylistic patterns laid down centuries before in Constantinople, in spite of their inner impulse towards realism could never reach an authentically Russian language, nor cope with any richer content than the arid mysticism of the Orthodox theologians.

The Renaissance

The Italian painters, starting from much the same point but allowed a vastly greater latitude of humanist realism, ushered in the Renaissance with Giotto and Masaccio: when, centuries later, this brave new world lay before the Icon painters they could not breathe its air. It was not merely that they had missed the bus, that the Renaissance was over long before they felt its impact—Japan, China and India likewise were untouched by the Renaissance. The world of Leonardo and of Galileo was a realist world: its interpreters needed a realist language: the formalist perfection of Icon painting unfitted it for the task.

Moreover Peter the Great was impatient, and his way of putting the clock forward was at times both brutal and artificial: his expedient for the rejuvenation of Russian art was to import artists from abroad and to send Russian painters to foreign lands to learn their trade. Whatever dividends this may have paid, it certainly gives to 18th-century Russian painting a depressingly provincial character. Worse still, it alienated art from Russia: made of it something remote and foreign—and, alas! genteel. Something a little like this is to be discerned in 18th-century England, where painting also tended to be tainted with a kind of "snob" value and Italianate influences overshadowed the native vigour of English painting.

As Hogarth, Blake and Samuel Palmer felt the need to assert the native vein of English painting, so also did the Russian artists of the 19th century. It is of special interest to watch the gradual emergence of an unmistakably Russian pictorial language from its first stirrings in the work of Argunov and Tropinin and Venetsianov to its fully conscious expression in the landscapes of Savrasov, Shishkin and Levitan and the portraits and figure compositions of Surikov, Kramskoy, Repin and Makovsky. Let us emphasise that this was a conscious development, mirrored equally in Russian literature and music, and that it went hand in hand with a growing progressive political current of thought. To paint in a Russian idiom, to choose Russian themes, even to paint the familiar Russian countryside rather than the Italianate landscapes beloved of Shchedrin, was in itself, in the context of that day, a crucial social choice—a definite political gesture. From this time on the mainstream of Russian art is increasingly concerned with a social reference, and when the thesis of "Art for Art's sake" does appear briefly from the turn of the century it does so as an alien intrusion.

To speak in a Russian idiom—how was that to be done? It is not enough to choose Russian themes and subjects—a language of one's own does not come as easily as all that! Nor can it be had on the cheap by the arbitrary choice of some remote dialect like Icon painting. Only the actual life of Russia and the actual background of that life could teach them the appropriate vocabulary. In this matter they had nothing else to do but to trust their eyes.

Realism and a content with social significance came naturally and inevitably to these painters of the 19th century: where the religious requirements, the theological content, and the consequent formal stylisation had constrained the earlier artists in a strait-jacket that permitted only the most rigid hieratic attitudes, realism gave the Russian artist a language of his own and the key to the whole field of Russian life—realism for them spelt freedom.

Realism still spells freedom for the artist in the Soviet Union—it is no artificial imposition from above, no such authoritarian dictation as some folk would have us believe, but an inner necessity of Russian art. The Socialist Realists of today appear in this exhibition as the inheritors of that astonishing visual innocence which allowed Levitan to paint a river as though it had been seen for the first time and seen once and for all—they appear as the inheritors of that social purpose which distinguishes Repin and Makovsky. They grow from the same roots as the artists of the 19th century: it was Vrubel and the painters of the "World of Art" group, the aesthetes, the adherents of Art for Art's sake, who were the alien graft. For all that there were gifted men among them we cannot miss the accent of provinciality that those who exile themselves in their own countries never seem quite to escape: it is all somehow trivial and sterile—the future lies elsewhere.

Indeed the future lay elsewhere. Into the slightly stuffy atmosphere of the "World of Art" there breaks a fierce gust from the world of men: Johanson's "Interrogation of the Communists"—magnificently conceived, designed and painted—unquestionably one of the great paintings of this century—a masterpiece announcing the birth of Socialist Realism.

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Socialist Realism

To pronounce the words "Socialist Realism" is tantamount to letting the cat in among the critical pigeons. Contemporary criticism holds as an axiom the proposition that the individual and society are polar opposites, and that no reconciliation between the two is conceivable. In their world every other man's life diminishes theirs—the individual is born with all his peculiarities thick upon him, and society is the killing frost which nips his blossoms. From this angle society, social responsibilities and social demands are seen as frustrations and inhibitions which hinder the full expression of a man's peculiar individuality. Society is pictured as flood in which identity meets its death by drowning. The assertion that Art is ultimately answerable to society, that its validity is judged by the social implications of its impact, is howled out of court as an infraction of the rights of the individual. The critics, like shyster lawyers hired to defend gangsters, besiege the Socialist Realists with writs of "Habeas Spiritus".

This would be all very well, and the Socialist Realists would indeed be in a sorry way, if this conception of the nature of individuality were true in fact. But the idea that the individual and society are in irreconcilable hostility is entirely false—the individual only exists as a knot of social relations, as the focus of a complex set of social associations, experiences, memories, hopes and fears. The word "I" expresses a relation between myself and other people—the more meagre and impoverished those relations are, the less distinct is my personality. Cut me off entirely from those social relations and my identity is indistinguishable. This loss of individual identity is the Nemesis that overtakes the artist who abandons society in pursuit of "pure subjectivity".

Of course this illusory conception of the freedom of the individual as entailing his isolation from society arises from objective realities: it has its roots in the nature of our social system, torn by internal contradictions, which appears more and more in a shape hostile to the free development of man. The artist in capitalist countries who still retains touch with society, whose work has a valid social reference, can only take up an attitude of protest—whether it be the conscious gesture of Peter de Francia's "Bombing of Sakhiet" or the reflex actions of the angry young men. The others, antagonised by society but unwilling to commit themselves to an explicit protest, retire into illusory introspective worlds in which they lose touch not only with other men but also with themselves.

To critics with such a background pictures like Plastov's "Collective Farm Workers" or Gavrilov's "Young Geologists" can only appear as sycophantic "conformism"—they are unable to believe in the existence of a society in which the worker is happy: unable to conceive a social order with a perspective of hope. Against the background of despair which is all a dying capitalism can offer, man figures only as a doomed creature who would have been wiser to remain a monkey.

Restrictive of Freedom?

Nature, as well as society, is seen in a hostile shape. Objective visual experience is thought of as somehow restrictive of the artist's subjective freedom. The critics see the Socialist Realists as being enslaved to the tyranny of "natural appearances". According to this contemporary trend of thought, objective visual perception is empty of subjective content: it is arbitrary, incoherent, meaningless. To paint "what we see" is to achieve only a mechanical double of a visual experience without any inner significance. What the artist does is to impose a coherent order upon nature, to group its unrelated events into a logical sequence, to make a consistent grammatical phrase or statement from chaotic elements. In order to do this he must distort his objective experience into a subjectively determined pattern. He must even be "free" to abstract all the objective elements of his visual experience and leave only the logical framework of his subjective statement. Realist painters are seen as dull mechanic hacks holding up a tedious mirror to a meaningless nature.

However, consciousness is not mere passive reception of some sort of camera image—nor is order and meaning something which we impose subjectively upon the outside world. Our visual perception of objective things is itself subjective. Nowhere, for men, is there any naked "object" devoid of subjective colouring. Nor is there any subjective content that does not derive from objective experience. To divorce the two is to falsify reality. It is equally false to think that we impose order upon Nature: on the contrary it is our objective experience of Nature which imposes order upon our thought. The only way in which we can develop our formal organisation of objective experience, the only way in which we can enrich our subjective content as painters, is by developing and enriching our visual perception of the world around us.

To believe that men can ever "paint what they see", in the sense of reproducing a mechanical "copy" of visual appearances, is as absurd as to fancy that anyone could ever "tell exactly what happened" exactly *as* it happened. There is a necessary alienation in every mode of the expression of truth, whether in speech or mathematics or painting, but this does not alter the fact that the essential question in any statement in any mode

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is the extent of its correspondence with objective reality. Levitan, painting his uncompromisingly realist "Warm Day", is not thereby losing any "subjective freedom"—on the contrary, it is impossible to conceive that the subjective content could find expression otherwise than through the sincere record of the visual experience. He would have impoverished that subjective content if he had not trusted his eyes.

To tell the truth, it is those who reject realism who fall under the tyranny of natural appearances: one does not rid oneself quite so easily of the objective world as they may think. Having "organised" the object into an arbitrarily imposed "subjective order" all should be well—but unhappily the mutilated object still challenges comparison with the facts of its "natural appearance": the subjective intention of the painter is submerged in the incongruity between image and reality. If the painter avoids all objective elements whatever he is no better off: for in this case his subjective content remains entirely incommunicable. The painting becomes a padded cell inside which the artist beats his knuckles against the walls, screaming "Let me out! Let me out!"

To me, therefore, it seems that these Soviet painters are justified both in their socialist content, in their epic glorification of men and women at work, and in their realist form. It seems to me that the way they have chosen allows a wider diversity of individuality and a greater freedom of content than is conceivable along our contemporary trends. And surely they are capable of communicating intelligibly to an infinitely greater audience. That audience, moreover, will grow while with us the question is continually being raised whether communication is possible at all between human beings.

Whatever naiveté of approach, whatever failure of taste, may have been discernible in this exhibition, I, for one, must acknowledge that these painters seemed to me to be re-asserting not only the dignity of man, as the painters of the Renaissance asserted it, not only the sovereignty of human reason, but also the dignity of painting. And all these things seem to me in danger of being forgotten amongst us.

Capitalist "Human Relations"

H. Horne

THERE must be many comrades engaged in efforts to develop class actions among their fellow workers, particularly in big industries, who have occasionally felt that, because their efforts have produced less spectacular effects than other sections of their industry, the policy of the Party for the industry is not sufficiently oriented towards the conditions existing in their factory or even that "their" workers are "different", more backward and less willing to struggle for wages and working conditions.

Of course, the fact of uneven development of capitalist industry carries with it a corresponding unevenness of class consciousness, and this has to be taken into account in estimating the potential for immediate struggle.

A factor perhaps less fully appreciated is the increasing practice since the war of the system (or rather, a multitude of systems) of class collaboration advanced under the general heading of "Human Relations in Industry".

A very great deal of effort has been, and is being, expended by bourgeois economists, "progressive" managements and others, to produce a "human approach" to problems at workshop level. Especially is this the case where it has been necessary to "sell" automation to the workers and thereby discourage the growth of militancy as its effects in terms of unemployment and increased labour exploitation become more and more obvious.

The more odious role here is, of course, as usual reserved for the Labour movement's "new thinkers", the Bringing Marx-up-to-date boys and the right-wing labour and trade union leaders whose labours in the cause of "productivity", "joint consultation" and all the rest of it remain unparalleled by their efforts on behalf of their members on the shop floor.

In Rome on October 13th, 14th and 15th, 1958, a useful beginning was made in the struggle to defeat these false ideas of "Human Relations".

A conference convened in that city under the auspices of the Gramsci Institute and the journal *World Marxist Review* brought together delegates from a dozen Communist Parties and the Italian and Sicilian Socialist Parties to discuss "The Theory and Practice of 'Human Relations' in Capitalist Industry".

The following notes are the main points emerging from discussion of seven reports based on experiences of human relations techniques in

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the U.S.A., Britain, Sweden, France, Belgium, Italy and West Germany.

Factors assisting development of "human relations" (Paternalism) in the United States are:

(*a*) Theory of "impartial" state.
(*b*) Ban on strikes.
(*c*) Union-boss contracts (which are often for up to five years).
(*d*) Legislation requiring "cool off" period before strike action.
(*e*) Legalistic tendency of unions to lean on large staffs of lawyers.
(*f*) Profit-sharing schemes.
(*g*) Tying of wages to productivity.
(*h*) Sick benefit schemes.

Right-wing adulation of "Fordism" contributes much impetus to Paternalism in America. It is noted that the papal encyclical *Quadragessimo Anno* bases much of its case on United States experience. Class collaboration is based on the myth of "People's Capitalism" and its chief exponent is Labour leader Walter Reuther. Differences in forms of the human relations technique in the United States from that of Europe are necessary for the capitalists, since European workers have long Communist-Socialist experience.

Despite the apparent success of "human relations" in the United States there is now a downward trend. Almost as many hours were lost in strikes during last year as in the rest of the capitalist world combined.

The great need is for an overall programme to prevent divisions among the workers.

A report was given of the operation of "human relations" in a big motor works in England. This brought out the need for flexible tactics and avoidance of sectarian mistakes in presenting our case. Much more discussion and exchange of experiences is needed in Britain if we are to appreciate the depth of the problem.

In Sweden the idea of "Social Solidarity" is propagated as the antidote to class struggle. Wide popularisation of the small share-owner helps to conceal the fact that 80 per cent of industry is wholly owned by 2 per cent of the population.

However, it is still necessary to use the coercive apparatus of the state, as witness legislation requiring the conclusion of collective agreements, seven days' notice of intention to strike, special courts which may compel striking workers to pay to the employer a sum equal to three times the wages lost by the strike action.

A Belgian comrade said there was a big movement in his country to promote share owning among the workers. But they were never allowed to hold enough shares to become directors.

He considered there is a possibility for fighting inside consultation machinery for improved conditions. As an example he quoted improved supplementary benefits paid by the employers and compensation for redundancy.

An Italian comrade showed how workers in the Fiat works were separated from the main working class stream by the payment of high wages and a wide variety of "fringe benefits".

In Italy T.W.I. (training within industry) had been taken to great lengths so that the foreman was not now a technician but a politician responsible for advancing management *policy* among the workers.

Human relations in Italy (as indeed in every report from American occupied countries) had been introduced initially by the United States military command.

From Austria came the idea that (according to the Catholic newspaper *Revolt*) the "capitalists *not* the Communists were today applying the ideas of Marx".

Conclusions

From the many contributions to the discussion the following stand out as being of general interest and productive of lessons for all Marxist parties:

The need to avoid sectarian mistakes such as had been in evidence in the Olivetti factory of Italy, where the militants had isolated themselves temporarily by opposing improved conditions not brought about by struggle, but "given" by the employer precisely to prevent struggle.

Again, in Western Germany where the Party newspaper had carried an article headed, "We are against profit sharing".

All spoke of the right-wing leaders' support of "human relations" and their attempts to create "new ideologies" based on this kind of class collaboration.

A masterly summing-up of the conference was made by a leading Italian comrade, who made these points:

Differences in human relations are not only structural, but political and tactical.

Special problems arise in countries with strong Social Democratic and Catholic influences.

To combat the "human relations" propaganda it is necessary to guard against the dangers of a new wave of revisionism in the working class movement, but at the same time sectarianism in this struggle must be avoided.

There is the need to hammer out policies to exploit all the contradictions which will arise from

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the development of "human relations".

For us in Britain the exchange of experiences has been sporadic and largely unorganised. This is something which needs to be given a great deal of attention and study.

If a great mass party like that of the Communist Party of Italy feels the need for more and greater efforts in this field as a condition for advance, then it seems to me we shall disregard the political and tactical problems involved here in Britain at our peril.

The point is that the socialist alternative has to be presented *at the level* and *in the context of the objective conditions* obtaining at a given time and place.

"Human relations" is a *way* of waging the class war. Its tactical basis is flexibility. We can learn from the enemy.

Discussion contributions:

On African Nations

B. R. Mann

IN an article entitled "The Formation of Nations in Africa"* I. Potekhin has put forward a number of considerations which have led him to the conclusion that for most of Africa no nations have yet emerged. In his view most of the criteria of the nation as defined by Stalin have not yet matured: there is not yet a single literary language, only a diversity of vernacular tongues and the official language which is that of the metropolitan country; in spite of the rich cultural heritage of the African peoples there are as yet no truly national cultures; there is as yet no national market, or at most the beginnings of one. In general, he believes, African nations are only in the process of formation, which in view of the many difficulties must be a protracted one.

Much of his argument hinges on the conception of the African *countries* as outlined by the colonial boundaries. In a previous article† it has been shown that in progressive British opinion this conception is giving way to one which regards as nations not the accidental collections of peoples enclosed within these arbitrary boundaries but the historically developed communities whose countries in many cases are intersected by these boundaries.

These communities have a history which goes back over many centuries. In the course of that history they have developed their own languages and cultures and their common economies within their own boundaries. They have built up their civilisation, their towns and cities based on handicrafts and trade, erected their own states or become subject to some larger empire, and, in short, had a history as varied and complex as that of any other continent. Not until quite recently were their economies ruined and their countries carved up among the colonial powers.

Nevertheless, Potekhin would still not grant these historical African communities the status of nations. His conclusion would still be that in general the question of the African nations is not one of the past or present but only of a somewhat indeterminate future. His conclusion rests on the following basic propositions:

1. The *ethnic community* of the peoples goes through several stages of development: *tribe*, *narodnost*, *nation*, corresponding broadly, but only broadly, to the development of the socio-economic systems.

2. Only where there is a developed capitalist market can one speak of an economic community; a nation can, therefore, only come into existence under the capitalist system.

3. At the turn of the century there was not nor could there be any nation in Africa because there was no capitalist society; colonisation found the African peoples at the stage of the primitive community with the characteristics of tribal organisation, and with few exceptions where feudalism and the *narodnost* have developed, they are in this stage today.

If these three propositions were quite self-evident and indisputable, so would the conclusions be. Is one justified, however, in assuming that there is general agreement on their validity, either among

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* *Marxism Today*, October 1958.

† B. R. Mann: "The Right of the African Nations to Self-determination", *Marxism Today*, January 1959. In a contribution to the discussion on the question of nationality J. M. Warren has raised a number of critical points on that article to which neither time nor space permit me to reply specifically in the present contribution. All the same, I hope she will find here the further explanations she asks for at least to one or two of her more general points.

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students of African affairs or among Marxists? Is there not, perhaps, a case for examining these propositions?

Ethnic Community or Nation?

Marxists have generally accepted the definition of the nation which was given by Stalin in *Marxism and the National Question* in 1913, when this question formed the subject of fundamental discussions in the Social Democratic parties of the time.

According to this definition a nation is a specific community of people which is neither racial nor tribal, i.e. it is not ethnically homogeneous but composed of a number of ethnic elements which in the course of history have come to form a single nation linked into an economic community. Through living together in a connected territory from generation to generation, they have in the course of time acquired a common national language, culture and character.

Nations are stable, preserve their identity over long periods of history and in spite of all kinds of adversities. The definition distinguishes them sharply from casual, ephemeral conglomerations held together by the power of a state alien to the majority of the nations, which fall apart as soon as that state power disappears.

From this definition Potekhin selects common territory, language, culture and economy as the characteristic features of a nation, omitting that they should be stable, historically constituted communities. He then qualifies the expression "economic community" in such a way that only a *capitalist* economy is covered by it. From this point onwards he operates with a new conception: the *ethnic community* which goes through the series of metamorphoses described in the paragraph numbered 1 above.

It is this latter conception which I think is bound to be questioned. For the things which change in response to changes in the economic base make up the superstructure. Few people would agree to equate the nation, the community of people which is fundamental to everything else, with a mere stage in the changing superstructure.

There is a point in distinguishing between ethnically homogeneous communities, such as can exist only in more or less complete historical isolation, from communities of complex ethnical composition which arise in the process of historical intercourse between peoples. The Marxist definition of the nation includes only the latter. But beyond that it makes no distinctions of quality such as would require the introduction of new terms, whether *ethnic community* or *narodnost*.

Migrations, conquests and the development of trade and communications began to break down the primitive isolation of the human communities in a very remote antiquity. Nations as distinct from ethnically homogeneous communities have therefore existed from the dawn of history; but not all the nations existing today were formed thus early. Some nations have grown at the expense of others and in some cases, e.g. in the Americas, new nations have been formed out of the fragments of almost all the nations of the world which came together on the new continent as conquerors, slaves or emigrants in comparatively recent times.

All this is quite in accord with the usage of the word "nation" in the works of Marx and Engels. They freely wrote of the nations of antiquity, and Engels, e.g., examined the genesis of the German nations after the breakdown of the Roman empire. In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels describe what the bourgeoisie has done to "even the most barbarian nations" and to "nations of peasants". Lenin and Stalin repeatedly referred to "nations which had passed *through* feudalism and developed capitalism". (My emphasis.—B. R. M.)

What, then, gave rise to the idea that nations were *only* formed in the capitalist period?

Capitalism, the Nation and the State

There is one difference between the use of the word "nation" today and in the nineteenth century: it included both the nation and the state, and the nations referred to by Marx and Engels, e.g., were in the main nations with states the frontiers of which broadly coincided with the boundaries of the national territory. Where a nation was included in the state of another nation, it was referred to as a "nationality" and the question of the nations without a state of their own became known as the question of the "nationalities" (Nationalitätenfrage). It was first raised by the growing bourgeoisie of the western European countries, by the bourgeois-democratic movements against feudal autocracy and national oppression.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, when the working class movement had begun to take on the character of an international movement, the national question, too, was raised in a broader sense. In 1896 the International Socialist Workers and the Trades Union Congress in London upheld "the full right of self-determination of all nations". This formulation obviously includes in the term nation both "nations" and "nationalities", nations both with and without their own state.

Further clarification of the meaning of the word "nation" came in the course of the broad international discussions of the early twentieth century in which Lenin and his party took the lead in formulating the consistent Marxist standpoint on the national question.

These discussions in essence covered the entire

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period of the advance to socialism and representatives of the working class of many nations, including eastern European and Asian nations, took part in them. They received renewed impetus after the October revolution had opened wide the floodgates to the national liberation movements of all the world.

Originally based on the experience of the European nations, the discussion became constantly enriched as more and more of the oppressed nations staked their claims to independent state existence. In this sense it continues to this day.

Only in the course of this discussion did the concept "state" become definitely and finally separated from the concept of the nation. The special word "nationality" signifying an oppressed nation deprived of the possibility of forming its own state thereby became obsolete. Its use nevertheless lingered on in some languages. In the Russian language it became transformed into its opposite as applied to the House of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

Only this separation of the concept of the state, a part of the superstructure, from the concept of the nation, the community of people itself, the fundamental source of all history, enables us to express the role of capitalism in the history of the nations in terms which apply to the experience of all nations, be they large or small, old or new, in whatever continent they are situated. For then we can see clearly that not the nation itself is the product of the capitalist period but the national state, a state the frontiers of which coincide with the boundaries of the national territory.

The states of the feudal period conformed to this condition only exceptionally. In general, they were either small states, covering only part of a nation, or large empires dominating a number of different nations. Hence the nations were oppressed, but they did not cease to be nations. On the contrary, the greater the oppression the greater is also the striving for self-determination. These features the modern colonial empires have in common with the feudal empires. The aim of the struggle against these conditions is the political unification of each nation into a single state.

Economic Community and Capitalist Market

In Potekhin's view the words "economic community" or "common economy" in the Marxist definition of the nation are virtually synonymous with "capitalist market". For he believes that the *economic community can only come into existence* when exchange relations have become regular and essential, while in the pre-capitalist period they were "sporadic and not at all essential".

According to Marx this is not the point of the distinction between pre-capitalist and capitalist forms of economy; but in the former the production and exchange of commodities are subordinate, whereas in the latter they predominate over all other relations of production. A national market therefore existed before the bourgeoisie took hold of it, although it may appear puny and insignificant as compared with the enormous development this market was given under capitalism.

There is nothing accidental in the choice of the term "economic community" and not "capitalist market" for the purpose of the definition of the nation. It indicates that the scope of the concept "nation" cannot be narrowed down to include only capitalist nations. Capitalism does not create the nations, on the contrary, it presupposes their existence.

Capitalism has, however, made a very considerable contribution to the consolidation and development of many nations, which is by no means to the advantage of the bourgeoisie alone. The erection of an independent, sovereign national state, e.g., is an objective in which all classes of the nation are equally interested. This contribution is well summed up by Lenin:

> "Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism was linked up with national movements. The economic basis of these movements is that in order to achieve complete victory for commodity production the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, must have politically united territories with a population speaking the same language, while all the obstacles to the development of this language and its consolidation in literature are removed. Language is the most important means of human intercourse; unity of language and unimpeded development are the most important conditions of a genuinely free and extensive commercial turnover corresponding to modern capitalism, of a free and broad grouping of the population in all their separate classes; finally, they are a condition for the close connection between the market and each and every proprietor and petty proprietor, seller and buyer.
>
> "The formation of *national states*, under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied, is therefore the tendency of every national movement." (*Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 250-251.)

This balanced assessment of the importance of capitalist development in the life of many nations does not preclude the possibility that in the experience of the majority of the nations of the world, especially the nations of Asia and Africa, it may be comparatively shortlived and of relatively little consequence. Capitalist economic and *political relations are more beneficial to a nation's* development than feudal relations, but socialist relations even more so. The bourgeoisie seeks to establish a national state; but even that is perfectly achieved only under socialism. Something as fundamental as the nation cannot be made

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dependent on something as transient as capitalism.

China may serve as an outstanding example. In all the long history of this great nation one can at best define a very brief period during which capitalist relations dominated in parts of Chinese territory. Neither the Chinese capitalist class nor the capitalist class of any foreign power ever succeeded in bringing the whole of China under its undisputed sway. Today China is marching to socialism and communism with seven-league boots. It would seem pointless on such grounds to refuse to speak of a Chinese nation, when among all the other attributes of the nation it possesses a national culture not only universally admired but antedating the capitalist period by many centuries.

If the proposition that capitalist relations are an indispensable condition for the existence of nations cannot be sustained, it follows that the presence or absence of capitalism has no bearing on the existence or non-existence of the nations of Africa.

Evolution or Revolution?

During the latter half of the nineteenth century there arose a school of thought which became known as evolutionism. In brief, it consisted of a mechanical application of Darwin's theories of biological evolution to social development and led to the conclusion that Victorian England represented the acme of all creation.

Evolutionism was grist on the mills of the empire builders. It served to justify the scramble for Africa and colonialism in general in the eyes of the mass of the ordinary people as a "civilising mission". Evolutionism did not bother about evidence; for all nations not of the "superior civilised races" were *a priori* classed as "primitive tribes", legally non-existent, *res nullius*.

Evidence from Africa, in so far as it was available, spoke entirely against this classification of the African peoples. It therefore became necessary to drown it in a flood of highly imaginative and totally misleading literature in order to sustain the sense of mission in the increasing numbers of people required to service the empire and to still the voices of protest at home.

Occasional glimpses of the truth could not be entirely suppressed, of course; they were invariably registered with expressions of surprise and astonishment, and promptly classified as "exceptions". As time went on, however, and acquaintance with Africa and its peoples improved, European anthropologists began to find it irksome perpetually to have to register surprises, and not to the advantage of their studies to continue using concepts both liable to cause offence and unsuited to the description of African conditions.

Having observed that neither the economies nor the beliefs and social and political institutions of the African peoples correspond to nineteenth-century conceptions of primitive society as described, among others, by Morgan for certain North American Indian tribes, many anthropologists are drawing the remarkable inference that primitive society is quite different from this picture. In this way they try to convince us that they have disposed not only of nineteenth-century evolutionism but of the revolutionary theory of social development of Marx as well.

Far from challenging evolutionism, this view panders to those aspects of it which still render it of service to imperialist designs in Africa, namely the conception that Africans cannot allegedly stand on their own feet in the modern world and depend on the benevolence of their superior European "partners". It is widely exploited to fortify the crumbling barriers between the African liberation movements and the European working class, and especially to discredit Marxism in the eyes of both.

Potekhin's article is intended to counteract this propagandist use made of anthropological research, and it is precisely because one welcomes this intention that one regrets he did not make use of more effective arguments than the propositions grouped above under (3).

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in deciding such issues is that none of the source materials from which information can be derived has been written with a well defined, generally acceptable scientific system of concepts in mind, let alone from a Marxist standpoint. In regard to the study of Africa we are therefore no better placed than Marx was when he began the study of political economy, or Lenin when he examined the development of capitalism in Russia. The key to their success lay in the careful sifting of the grain of reliable fact contained in their sources from the chaff of philosophical and political misconceptions.

If we follow that method, surely the straightforward and conclusive answer to the anthropologist's dilemma is not so difficult. The facts their African researches have brought to light are not in accordance with what is known of primitive society; hence the gratuitous assumption of the evolutionists, that African society is primitive, has been proved false.

Once we have rid ourselves of this misconception the whole of the African problem appears in a new light. The barriers that appeared to divide the "primitive" Africans from the "civilised" Europeans can be seen to have no material existence. African states and civilisations cease to be a riddle the solution of which must be looked for outside the continent; it becomes clear that they are the creation of the African nations themselves, the result of their continuous history from ancient times.

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Modern archaeological and historical research is tending more and more to this conclusion. Gervaise Mathew, not a man who would form such a view in eagerness or haste, has recently written:

> "When I first began archaeological work on the East African coast eleven years ago, I assumed that the ruins and sites that I was investigating were the remains of Arab or Persian colonies along the coast . . . but gradually I have come to doubt it; now it seems to me that the history of the coast in the medieval period is more easily intelligible as the history of an African culture gradually Islamised than merely as the history of Islamic colonies from the Persian Gulf" (*Africa South*, Vol. 2, No. 2).

There could hardly be a surer indication that the idea of Africa as the home of primitive tribes is increasingly becoming untenable. The history of Africa before the European conquest is not a question of evolutionary theory but of Marx's revolutionary, materialist conception of history, just like that of any other continent.

Vernacular Tongues or National Languages?

Besides the theoretical propositions which he regards as self-evident, Potekhin offers only one consideration in which he sees proof for his contention: the multiplicity of languages.

> "It is true that the linguistic divisions are a fact, and one which no scholar can deny or ignore since it is an irrefutable proof that for most of Africa neither nations nor narodnosts have yet emerged. The linguistic divisions reflect the tribal divisions of the people."

Far from proving anything, this simply begs the question. A complex language distribution can come about in many different ways, and so long as we have not studied the detailed history of the speakers of these languages we are in no position to know what it reflects. In North America, e.g., there exist widely scattered communities for whom newspapers and entire literatures are published in an enormous number of languages; by comparison, the linguistic pattern of Africa, a continent nearly one-and-a-half times as large, is almost simple.

In both cases wars, conquests, emigration, colonisation, the slave trade, and the search for land, minerals and opportunities for trade have contributed to the complexity of the picture. In Africa, these historical processes were subsequently intensified by the intervention of imperialism which included the wholesale transportation of people from lands confiscated by the foreign powers.

But none of this does away with the fact that the languages themselves, wherever they are spoken, are the national languages of the peoples who in their overwhelming majority still live in their ancient lands. This also is as true of Africa as of any other continent.

There are very few African languages which are not written as well as spoken, do not serve as a medium for long-distance communication; all but the relatively rare international meetings attended by members of the several nations inhabiting a given colonial territory are naturally conducted in the national languages, and nationalist newspapers have been published in them whenever imperialism did not prevent it. In fact, one of the most potent means of counteracting the political movements of the African nations has been for the colonial administrations to publish official newspapers in the national languages, not to mention the Bible. It is difficult to see how Potekhin could have got the contrary impression.

Potekhin is not trying to make out a case for African "exceptionalism"; on the contrary, he is trying to get away from this conception. But he appears to be hamstringing his own arguments by a set of propositions which to many Marxists will not be as self-evident as they are to him; rather do they raise a number of fundamental questions of Marxist theory as well as lead to conclusions which are not entirely compatible with the evidence.

Among the evidence we must now reckon the historic second Accra conference, a most eloquent proof of the existence of the African nations. To leave us in no doubt, this conference has placed on the agenda of history the question of erasing the artificial colonial frontiers and the re-establishment of the historical national boundaries. It decisively challenged the imperialist concept of Africa as *res nullius*.

In one of his prefaces to the *Communist Manifesto* Engels wrote:

> "Without re-establishing the unity and independence of each nation, it is impossible to create the international unity of the proletariat, nor the peaceful and intelligent collaboration of these nations towards common aims."

Experience has time and again proved the truth of this statement, particularly so since the Bandung Conference. When the African nations have solved their question, and few would today say that their movement is anything but irresistible, they will also have removed one of the last obstacles from the road to world socialism.

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On the Jewish Problem

IT is a long time since I saw such a tangle of confusion and contradictions as that displayed by Bert Ramelson in "An Old Problem Rediscussed".

The very first sentence claims that "The Jewish problem is not the same as the problem of Israel". A very convenient sort of theory which leaves only anti-semitism as the real problem. The truth is that the existence of Israel impinges, to some extent, on Jewish life in all countries, and Ramelson underlines this truth in his own article, by dealing at some length with the problem of Israel and then contradicting his own theory.

Similarly, on the national question he emphasises that since the Jews are not a nation, they cannot be affected by the national question. If that is true, how is it that Ramelson himself can state as he does that an "Israeli nation is rapidly emerging"? Can such a nation emerge in such circumstances without pre-supposing that the national question does indeed apply? Should we not be examining the particular historic forms and inter-connections that gave it birth?

I think it is time we realised that our approach as in Ramelson's article has led us into a blind alley. The theory that "anti-semitism is the main issue" was true enough in the pre-war years and succeeded in rallying the Jews in the fight against Fascism. But we have failed altogether to recognise the intense feeling of Jewish consciousness that arose as a direct result of the Nazi murders and which had such a powerful impetus on the national struggle for the State of Israel. Since the war, this factor has played a much more important part in Jewish life than the problem of anti-semitism. By ignoring it as we have done, we have cut ourselves off from the main body of Jewish people so that the splendid and widespread support we were once proud to have is now at a low ebb.

More than that, as our influence decreases, that of the reactionaries grows. The sad fact related by Ramelson of Jewish workers supporting the Suez aggression shows the extent of this decline among a body of workers that were always generally clear-sighted politically.

Only when we take cognisance of the new Jewish consciousness and work out a positive policy in line with it will we once again take up the position of leadership that we once held on the Jewish question.

JACK ROSENBERG.

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